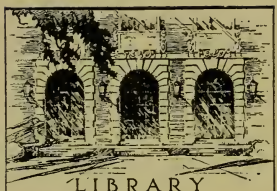

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THE
PILGRIM OF THE CROSS.

VOL. III.

THE

PILGRIM OF THE CROSS;

OR,

THE CHRONICLES

OF

CHRISTABELLE DE MOWBRAY.

AN ANCIENT LEGEND.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

By ELIZABETH HELME,

AUTHOR OF

ST. MARGARET'S CAVE, OR THE NUN'S STORY;
LOUISA, OR THE COTTAGE ON THE MOOR;
ST. CLAIR OF THE ISLES, &c. &c.

VOL. III.

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THE PILGRIM OF THE CROSS.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN the afternoon Hamet requested the baron and his friends to be present at the opening of his treasure, and though they would have declined it, the denial appeared to give him so much vexation, that they at length consented. Previous to the ar-

rival of Bertram, the Saracen, by Jaques, addressed de Pointz to this purport,—"I trust I need not tell the baron, that whatever I possess is at his command; and I expect as a proof of his friendship, that he should in any emergency use my gold as his own. For that good youth, Bertram, among us we will assuredly make him amends for his disinterested conduct."

The baron agreed to the proposal, making Jaques and Gregory witness what sum he meant to borrow of the Saracen; and Bertram and his cousins soon after joining them, Hamet wrenched open the chest.

Though all expected a rich assortment of jewels, their expectations fell far short of the reality.—"This," said Hamet, dropping a tear on a rich tiara, "my mother wore in the days of her exultation, when she thought herself sole possessor of my father's heart; latterly such glittering toys

toys were of no value in her eyes, but as they might procure me happiness. Alas! how willingly would I have resigned all to save my Selima; but the wish is vain, and I must endeavour to find comfort in adopting Bertram's opinion, that we shall meet again."

Rings, and bracelets for the wrists and ancles, with jewels for the head, neck, and bosom, clasps, and every ornament which wealth or luxury could devise, were in profusion; and to compleat the whole, gold to an immense amount, both in the gross and for traffic. As they viewed the jewellery an involuntary exclamation escaped Bertram; and snatching up a string of mingled agate, rubies, emeralds, topazs, and pearls, he presented to their astonished sight a rosary of inestimable value, to the end of which was pendant a cross of large diamonds of the finest quality.

"Gracious Heavens!" exclaimed he, "how came this precious remembrancer among the ornaments of an unbeliever?"

Hamet saw his astonishment, though he did not comprehend his words; and turning to Jaques, he said,—"Though I do not know the use of that string of jewels, yet by the cross it appertains to your faith, and I believe I can nearly inform you how it came into the possession of my mother. You have heard me speak of a Christian captive whom my father loved, her name was Mary la Pole. She was so strongly attached to her faith, that neither honours nor neglect could force her to relinquish it, and it was even said, that my father to win her, was obliged to feign himself of her belief; but the truth once revealed, though she had a daughter, she would never after submit to his embraces. In the days of his lavish fondness, and while he

he kept up the deception, he presented her with the jewels of which that string is composed. She was poisoned by a jealous rival, and after great suffering, came to the haram near Joppa, but was in so weak a state that she was unable even to collect her valuables; and this ornament falling by chance into my father's hands, he either thought it too rich for a decayed favourite, or wished to deprive her of what he knew she regarded as a symbol of her faith. He after a few months gave it to my mother, to have set in some form more agreeable to his inclination; but from the profusion of jewels you see, she never had occasion to use them."

As Jaques listened to Hamet, he pressed the rosary with reverence to his lips; and as he afterwards repeated the account to Bertram and the baron, the youth energetically followed the example; an action,

which on his part, by no means astonished the baron, who acquainted with his reverence for religion, had no doubt but that the remembrance of Mary la Pole was imprinted on his memory, from the perusal of the chronicles of Christabelle de Mowbray.

"That ornament," continued Hamet, "I cannot, as I now view the Christians, regard as mine, but appertaining to the Christian slave and her daughter who escaped to Europe; and where, as I have indistinctly heard, the maid wedded the captive who fled with them, and who was a chief in his own land, but afterwards slain in Palestine, where he attended Richard of England. Should I live to reach your country, you must assist me to discover whether Hamet's daughter be living; for Mary it is impossible, as previous to her leaving this country, she was for some years

years in a confirmed decay. If I am fortunate enough to discover Corally, for so was she called, she shall find I remember, that though we had different mothers, the same blood purples our veins; and that though I am a Saracen I can respect a Christian sister."

The baron listened with curiosity till he concluded, when, to his great surprise, Jaques, instead of explaining the discourse, embraced the Saracen, replying in his own language,—"Thy generosity overpowers me!"—Then pausing, he added, "would we had known each other sooner, for though I detested the character of thy father, I were a monster not to honour thee!"

For some moments Jaques appeared too much affected to continue his interpretation, but at length informed the baron of the noble offer of Hamet. If it had before

overpowered Jaques, it had scarcely less effect on the baron and Bertram, who each took a hand of the Saracen, the latter raising that he held, respectfully to his lips, while Maynard and Alan in silence admired the generous infidel, and inwardly prayed Heaven to lead him into the bosom of the holy faith.

"Alas! Jaques," said the baron, "inform him that the unhappy family of de Mowbray all sleep in the grave;—tell him that though I knew them not, I deplore their fate, that my mother loved them, —and in short all *thou* knowest."

Jaques obeyed, and no eye refused a tributary tear to the memory of youth, merit, and beauty, hastened to an untimely tomb. Jaques's feelings, during the recital, at intervals choaked his utterance; while the baron internally lamented that it had fallen to him to relate a tale of sorrow, which

which apparently, by some resemblance, revived the memory of his own misfortunes.

Their melancholy was somewhat relieved by the entrance of Gregory, who informed them a messenger had arrived from the cadi, to specify that on the evening of the following day, the captive knights would be brought to the gates of Joppa, when, if the ransom demanded was ready, they would be restored.

Bertram stole a glance at the baron, who replied, — "I understand that enquiring look, and as, notwithstanding thy secresy, I must consider thee as worthy my affection, I would have accepted thy offer, but that thou see'st Hamet is so well provided that he can best supply me."

Bertram looked dissatisfied but made no answer.

"Keep thy gold, my good youth," resumed de Pointz, "I shall ever remember

thy generosity with gratitude; and those jewels, so nobly offered, I trust hereafter to see decorate thy bride."

"I shall never need them for that purpose," said Bertram.

While they conversed Hamet appeared buried in reflection, until at length addressing Jaques, he said,—"I have been meditating on the fortune which, even here in Palestine, led me to one who could inform me of my father's daughter, Corally. I have then no relative in the world.—What age is Bertram?—I pray you ask him."

Jaques repeated the question.

"Nineteen and some few months," replied the youth.

"Thou art not so old by at least three years," interrupted the baron, "therefore why anticipate the time?"

"Do

"Do you think me a liar?" answered Bertram.

"No," said de Pointz, "but as a youth who possessing the understanding of a man wishes to pass for one."

"You say true," replied Bertram, "I indeed wish to pass for what I am not; but Heaven in its own time will discover all."

"It will discover nothing to thy dishonour, or I am much deceived," said the baron.

Jaques repeated Bertram's answer to the Saracen, who, like de Pointz, thought him some years younger.—"He makes himself too old for my son," replied he, "yet I will consider him as such;—ask him if he consents?"

Jaques made the demand.

"On my knees, if he will become a Christian," replied Bertram.

Hamet

Hamet smiled as Jaques repeated his answer.—" If ever I embrace your belief," said he, " it must be from conviction.—I must understand your language, examine your tenets, and consider whether the generality of your brethren are actuated by the same spirit as those I already know."

" Hamet is right," said the baron, " he will be a convert from conviction, not from form."

" The saints hasten that day," returned Bertram, " then will I indeed be his most dutiful child!"

Jaques repeated his words to Hamet, who was employed in selecting some valuable jewels, and as he concluded entreated his acceptance of a ring; praying him also to present one to the baron, with a jewel each to Maynard and Alan. All would willingly have declined his presents, but the

pain

pain their denials gave him forced them to acquiesce, as it was apparent he considered a refusal as scorning his proffered friendship.

"And now for Bertram," said he, "tell him, I pray you, Jaques, that I have not forgotten the tears he shed for me, nor his intercession for Selima;—the remembrance is grateful to my soul, and as I pray him to continue it, I entreat him to wear this ornament for my sake."

As he spoke, he threw the rosary round the youth's neck, who appeared struck dumb with astonishment; but recovering from his surprise, he begged to decline the present, though he would ever remember it with gratitude.

"Take it, my dear lad," said Jaques, "it is a prophetic gift, and the saints inspire the donor."

"Aye,

"Aye, Bertram," added the baron, "receive it as it merits;—it appertained to one of the most holy of women, and a blessing hangs over it which infidelity had not power to break. In England we will endeavour to return these obligations."

The youth's feelings were too great for utterance, he took the precious ornament from his neck, and kneeling at Hamet's feet laid it on his garment.

"Not so," said the Saracen, "if not for my sake, tell him Jaques, to wear it for that of Mary la Pole.—Had she or any of her descendants survived it should truly have been delivered to them; but as that gratification is denied me, I give it him merely for his veneration to his faith."

Bertram still remained kneeling, when Jaques said,—"In truth thou do'st wrong to decline so holy a gift; what but Heaven itself

itself could inspire an infidel with the thought of presenting a rosary to a Christian?"

"Most true.—For my sake, dear Bertram," said the baron, "take it, or more properly for a remembrancer of the saint to whom it appertained."

As he spoke, Hamet again pressed the gift on Bertram, who made no further refusal, but raising his eyes bathed in tears to Heaven, received and deposited the sacred jewels in his bosom.

In the evening, as they conversed, the discourse turned on the family of Hamet, and the misfortunes of de Mowbray; when de Pointz observed that the only information he had ever received on the subject, was from the chronicles of the daughter of the latter, and of which he spoke with a degree of admiration that surprised those who understood his encomiums.

"You

"You have then chronicles, written by that maid," replied Jaques.—"I understood she was unknown to you."

"She was so," answered the baron, "her chronicles, after her death, fell into my hands, nor will I ever part with them but with my life."

"Do they then contain secrets of such import, my Lord?" said Jaques.

"Secrets of no import, save to the family of de Mowbray and my own;—I, therefore, regard myself as the rightful possessor.—Bertram hath read them, and can testify that I do not exaggerate when I say the writer joined a cultivated understanding to a tender, affectionate, and invaluable heart.—Say you not so, Bertram?"

Bertram hesitated, but at length replied,—"The benefits she received from your mother would have inspired affection even in

in a savage bosom, and the grief she experienced for her death was natural.—Yet think you not, my Lord, that some part of her conduct favoured much of weakness?"

"Weakness!" repeated the baron, angrily, "by my soul, had a man said so I would have dashed my gauntlet in his face!"

Bertram appeared alarmed at the baron's violence,—"My Lord, pardon me, I simply meant to reply to your question.—Nay, do not frown on me, I would Christabelle de Mowbray had possessed all the qualities with which you dignify her."

"She did possess them, thou insensible boy.—How comes it, in this case, thou hast so little feeling?—I scarcely thought of Christabelle de Mowbray till her letters first awoke my sympathy towards her;—her subsequent death severely grieved me, and

and her chronicles, every time I peruse them, fix a fresh hold on my heart!"

Jaques, with his head leaned on his hand, appeared lost in thought during the dispute, which when concluded, he said,—"I hope I shall not offend, but if you have suffered the young Bertram to read them—I feel the insolence of my request;—should the domain of my father ever be restored to me, three-fourths would I willingly give to peruse those chronicles!"

The unconnected manner of this address astonished the baron,—he had before remarked that Jaques spoke firmly though with feeling on de Mowbray's sorrows, and had no doubt but a friendship had subsisted between them.—"Never," replied he, "have I willingly suffered any one to see them but Fitz-Hugh; chance alone threw them into the power of Bertram, whose

whose cold judgment I cannot pardon.—I regard you as my friend, and as one on whose honour I can rely, you shall therefore be satisfied."

Jaques was rather warm than profuse in his thanks, and Bertram with his cousin, soon after took leave for the night.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXXIV.

ON the following day the chiefs of the crusaders assembled, in order to prepare for the liberation of the captive knights. Jaques had been busied the whole of the day in the interior of the tent, in perusing the chronicles of Christabelle de Mowbray; and which had so greatly affected him, that all the persuasions of the baron were fruitless, to make him leave them even to take the smallest refreshment. His eyes were

were swoln with tears, heavy sighs escaped him, he shunned the sight and conversation of all; and even as night approached, begged to be excused accompanying them to the gates of Joppa.

Neither Bertram nor his cousin had visited the baron that day, a circumstance rather uncommon; but interested respecting Fitz-Hugh, and retaining some anger for Bertram's reply the night before, he forbore to send to enquire for them.

The crusaders assembled, the friends of Villeneuf and la Tours bearing their ransom, and de Pointz that of Fitz-Hugh, they were preparing to depart, when at the opening of Maynard's tent, the baron discovered the old man and his son alone. He loved Bertram too well not to feel some anxiety on his account; and Maynard bowing, he said,—"Where is Bertram,

tram, I pray ye?—Though he seriously offended me last night, I trust he is not ill."

"Not in body, but in mind, my Lord," answered Maynard, "he severely feels for having displeased you; but believe me, his answer proceeded merely from the eccentricity of his temper."

"Nothing more, on my life," said Alan, "for I have heard him a thousand times wish that you had loved the Lady Christabelle, which he would not have done except he judged well of her, for he would not think an angel too good for the Baron de Pointz."

"If he be within I pray you ask him to accompany us, we are going to ransom the captives."

Alan obeyed, and in a few moments returned with his cousin, who took the baron's offered hand with respect and affection; but declined accompanying him to

to Joppa.—" A moment's consideration will shew you, my Lord," said he, " the impropriety of such a measure; recollect that the knight, Fitz-Hugh, and myself did not part in friendship, and my presence at his release might look like an insolent triumph over his misfortunes."

" Thou art right," replied the baron. Farewel! let me see thee speedily.—Jaques is not well, and thy presence may soothe him."

So speaking the baron left them, and joining his party, went forward to Joppa; while Bertram, with Alan, repaired to Jaques, whom they found plunged in melancholy, and the generous minded Saracen in vain endeavouring to comfort him.

The sweet voice of Bertram, and his unaffected piety, had before soothed the soul

soul of Jaques; nor did it even now entirely fail of its effect.

"You have been reading these chronicles, my good Sir," said he, for they yet laid before him; "and your mind is so lacerated with suffering, that it cannot even bear a recital of foreign sorrows.—Consider this, I pray you, as a mournful tale, sad only to the survivors, for the principals rest from their labours in everlasting blessedness."

Jaques made no answer but by tears, which flowed in torrents down his furrowed cheeks; while Bertram casting his eyes around, in one corner of the tent discovered his lute, which had been casually left there. He hastily snatched it up, passed his light fingers across the strings, and raising his eyes, accompanied his music with a requiem to blessed spirits, in a voice so touchingly harmonious, that the

the soul of Jaques appeared raised from earth to Heaven; while Hamet entranced with the harmony, though ignorant of the words, as he concluded, grasping his arm, exclaimed, in the Saracen tongue,—"Is this boy mortal or spirit?—If the first, at least his voice is that of Paradise!"

Jaques somewhat more calm, Bertram at length with Alan arose to go, and making the same excuse to the veteran and Hamet as he had to the baron, respecting Fitz-Hugh, they were suffered to depart, promising to see them the ensuing day.

In the mean time the crusaders proceeded towards Joppa, in the mid-way to which, to the great surprise of all, but particularly to the baron, they met Fitz-Hugh, accompanied by two priests and some pilgrims belonging to their company.

"Is it possible! Fitz-Hugh!" cried the baron, embracing him, "how happens

this?—we are at least two hours before the time appointed by the cadi of Joppa; I have thy ransom with me, as our friends have those of Villeneuf and la Tours."

"My ransom has been paid even before noon," replied Fitz-Hugh, in a dispirited voice. "My unhappy comrades are not, I judge, yet brought to the gates, but I pray you hasten to their succour; for however rejoiced at my own liberation, my heart bled to leave them behind, though these good fathers (pointing to the priests) assured them their friends were coming to their relief."

"Astonished as I am to see thee free, we will not lose a moment in questions. Wilt thou proceed to the camp, or walk back with us?"

Fitz-Hugh preferred the latter; and entering into conversation with the baron, he was astonished to find that his ransom had come

come from some other quarter. Turning to the priests who had paid it, he demanded an explanation, but his enquiry was fruitless, the senior replying,—"We are not at liberty to disclose the name of the person to whom you are obliged; rest satisfied, that he doth not good actions to receive the thanks of men."

Reaching the gates of the city, they waited some time, when Villeneuf and la Tours being brought, their ransom was paid, and they were restored to their friends.

On their return, the liberation of Fitz-Hugh employed all the baron's thoughts, as it did also those of the knight. Again they attempted to procure intelligence of the priests, but they only replied by exhorting the latter to beware of future temptation, lest he might not be so fortunate as in the present instance.

Having reached the camp, and mutual congratulations passed, Fitz-Hugh accompanied the baron to his tent, where finding no one, he exclaimed,—" And where, I pray you, is our wise friend Bertram?—That young philosophising varlet hath me now in the toils, for disregarding his prudent advice."

" He is in his tent I conjecture, for he declined accompanying us to Joppa," answered the baron. " Nay, more, I have no doubt but 'tis he who by some means hath procured thy liberation, although I am convinced he had not gold sufficient for that purpose."

The baron then related the offer of Bertram, and his having declined it; adding, —" Thou knowest he hath a proud heart, and I am convinced was resolved we should be obliged to no other than himself. He said he had jewels to make up what

what he wanted in gold, and these he hath doubtless deposited to supply the deficiency."

"I am assured you are right," answered Fitz-Hugh, with evident vexation, "for when my ransom was told out, I remarked one of the cadi's ill-looking rascals anxiously examining two large jewels."

"Let it not vex thee," said the baron, "in England all shall be repaid; and I flatter myself thou do'st not hold my friendship so lightly, as to let the word obligation come between us."

Jaques and Hamet at that moment entered; the first warmly congratulated Fitz-Hugh on his fortunate escape, while the latter followed his example in shaking him by the hand.

Fitz-Hugh, with his usual openness, related to Jaques their thoughts respecting Bertram; adding, — "To confess the

truth, however I feel obliged to him, the reflection is a confounded drawback on my satisfaction in again finding myself safe."

"As long as thou art so," interrupted the baron, "be satisfied; for the present, I pray thee inform us how the Saracens seized and behaved to thee, and to thy comrades in misfortune."

"Why," replied Fitz-Hugh, "they caught us like fools and treated us as we deserved, like asses, for had we given ourselves but a moment's consideration, we never should have ventured to such a distance, and on such an errand; a plague on all dancing, say I, the very name henceforth will be sufficient to give me the ague."

"If thou hast bought wisdom by paying the piper it is well," answered the baron, "but pray thee go on."

"When

"When we reached their tent," continued Fitz-Hugh, "I remarked two camels standing near the spot, but they excited no suspicion in my mind.—We entered, and I gave one girl a broad piece of gold, and was suffered to salute her in return, when on a sudden a most discordant noise disturbed us; eight Saracens, armed with sabres, rushed in, and in spite of resistance bound our hands and feet, and then threw us over their beasts like sacks of meal. I thought I should have been jolted to death, for the camel went at a confounded rate;—our legs were not untied until we had reached Acon, nor had we other food but bread and water, either by the way, or when there.—We were confined in a dungeon, and given to understand that we were to be sold as slaves."

"Poor Fitz-Hugh," said the baron, "in faith I pity thee, and feel my good

fortune in having escaped; but what, I pray thee, became of thy fair partner and the other dancers?"

"Sorrow light on them," replied Fitz-Hugh, "they might be dancing in the devil's orgies, for ought I know or care, for I saw no more of them.—I have no doubt but, having ensnared us, they took refuge in Joppa, while the myrmidons of the cadi drove us over the burning desert, though I should first tell thee they rifled us of every valuable we possessed."

Jaques having explained the discourse to Hamet, he replied,—"It is as I suspected, the vagrant master of the girls had, no doubt, informed the cadi of their expected return, and perhaps was promised a good sum of gold to betray them; but to give their seizure the better-colour, they were carried to Acon."

The

The discourse then turned on their leaving Palestine; the baron's spirits were exhilarated by Fitz-Hugh's liberation, while his were equally so to find himself once more safe among his friends. Hamet apparently, though silent, shared their satisfaction, but Jaques appeared lost in thought; and though he evidently struggled to mingle in the conversation, both his words and actions shewed the absence of his mind.

The baron, during the evening, asked him what he judged of Christabelle de Mowbray from the writing he had perused, to which question he replied,—"I will hereafter, my Lord, enter fully into the subject of the chronicles, but at present I am unfit; let it suffice, I think she was an angel worthy her birth, worthy her patron, and worthy that Heaven where she now rests in blessedness." As he spoke he arose

hastily and, as if fearful of trusting his feelings, rushed from the tent.

"I grieve," said the baron, "that I advanced the subject. Jaques's sorrow appears sacred, I am persuaded he loved the family of de Mowbray, and restrains himself before me from a principle of delicacy; although he must be convinced, I consider their misfortunes with pity, and that the memory of their daughter is dear to me."

Hamet appeared concerned; they truly conjectured he was uneasy at the departure of Jaques, and at his visible emotion. They then made signs that he would speedily return, and resuming the discourse respecting their departure from the Holy-Land, de Pointz observed that his voyage thither had been productive of no event worthy record, and consequently his dream in the Castle of Latimer should be considered as merely a phantom of the imagination,

gination,—"Although," added he, "it was so strongly recalled to my memory by Bertram, that it prevented me falling into the snare that had nearly proved so fatal to you."

"Recalled to your memory by Bertram," repeated Fitz-Hugh, "how was that possible,—did you then reveal it to him?—surely there was no necessity for such a trust."

"Nor did I," replied de Pointz. "Thou may'st remember that he threw himself before me when I attempted to leave the tent to accompany thee,—he then requested an answer to one question, and demanded in a low voice whether it was for *that purpose* I came to Palestine. I am convinced the question was accidental, but it staggered me, and fortunately obliged me to relinquish my design."

"I

"I rejoice it did so," returned Fitz-Hugh, "and wish he had been equally successful with me; but I pray you banish that ridiculous dream from your memory, for all you have obtained by this voyage is some credit, which you have purchased at a great expenditure."

"I think not of it; yet cannot but confess, that I should have been more gratified, had some action of note dignified our mission."

"Thank Heaven, our bones are whole, and we are free," answered Fitz-Hugh, "a blessing you cannot so sensibly feel as I do, from my late escape. Indeed," continued he, in his usual chearful manner, "had it not been for Bertram, your voyage might have been dignified by my liberation; but that honour he hath snatched from you, and you must return as you came, except in purse."

"I

"I have indeed met with but few occurrences that are worthy recalling to my remembrance; but among those, I will in the first place acknowledge the acquaintance of Bertram."

"Of Bertram," interrupted Fitz-Hugh, "a child—a boy! nursed, as I judge, by his grandmother, whose antiquated notions he hath sucked in with his pap; and whose only preceptor was doubtless the old family priest, who tottering on the brink of the grave, preached forbearance of what he could no longer enjoy."

"I would that both thou and I had possessed such a grandmother and preceptor," replied de Pointz; "but as that cannot be, I will turn to Jaques, there at least, I consider myself as the instrument of Heaven."

"That I shall not contend," replied Fitz-Hugh, "for never in my journey through

through life, have I met with a man in whom the noble, the scholar, the soldier, and the sufferer, were so interestingly blended."

"It is most true," answered the baron; "he is also more unhappy than usual, therefore, I pray thee, let us seek him."

Fitz-Hugh agreed, and taking Hamet's arm they walked through the camp; at the extremity of which they found the veteran alone, seated under a tree, and apparently lost in melancholy reflections."

On perceiving their approach, he arose to meet them, making an apology for his conduct, to which the baron only replied by taking his hand; while Hamet grasped the other, saying in his own language,—"Why do'st thou so selfishly confine thy sorrows within thy own heart?—Though I am a Saracen, I am a man, formed by the

the hand of the same Creator,—and esteem thee as a friend and brother."

Jaques returned the friendly pressure.—"Hamet," replied he, "thy friendship is precious to my wounded spirit; yet there are remembrances which can never be effaced."

"Most assuredly," answered he; "and who can more truly feel that asseveration than myself?—Ha'st thou no tie of blood remaining?—Hath thy brother sought thy life?—Are thy steps proscribed in thy own country, for guilt thou never committed?—And to compleat all, ha'st thou seen the beloved of thy soul perish in the depth of a dungeon, bereft of all the comforts her melancholy state required?—Ha'st thou digged a grave for her with thine own hands?—Ha'st thou contemplated her decaying features, and at length with an effort of distraction and madness, thrown earth

earth on her beauteous body, to conceal it even from thy own sight?—Say, are thy sorrows greater than mine? if they are, Heaven indeed can alone soothe them!"

"Hamet," replied Jaques, "my sorrows are widely different, yet they are equally severe; and my mind weakened by almost twenty years slavery, sickens for everlasting rest."

The baron judged from the manners of both, that their conversation was not calculated to relieve the mind of either; therefore taking Jaques by the arm, he endeavoured to divert his thoughts by a discourse respecting their embarkation, which was to take place in two days.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXXV.

ON the ensuing morning at an early hour, Fitz-Hugh calling on the baron, requested his company to Bertram's tent. The invitation was readily accepted; and having reached it, the baron called aloud at the aperture. Maynard immediately came forth; and having expressed his satisfaction on seeing Fitz-Hugh at liberty, requested to know their pleasure.

"Is

"Is Bertram within?" returned the baron, "if he be, I pray you give us leave to converse with him awhile."

Maynard bowed acquiescence, and leading the way entered. Bertram and Alan were seated, but arose on their entrance, the first congratulating Fitz-Hugh in the warmest terms, while the latter, with more than his usual diffidence, drew back, and appeared at a loss to express his satisfaction.

"Accept my warmest acknowledgements," answered Fitz-Hugh, "for I come not only to confess you wiser than myself, but also to thank you on an account which I can only repay hereafter."

"I have no claim on you," replied the youth.

"Well said, modesty.—No trifle then of gold or jewels stand between us."

"I

"I never lent you either," said Bertram. "If you wish to borrow, such as I have are at your service, but the interest I ask is great; yet I am convinced that the Knight Fitz-Hugh has a heart to satisfy the demand."

"Name it."

"Your friendship, I have no other."

"I will not be conquered thus," replied he, "I know my debt and feel its weight. Nay, no reply, denial is vain;—why ha'st thou done this, except to triumph over me?"

"If ever I wished to triumph over you," answered Bertram, "except the day which proved so disastrous to you, may shame and sorrow be my portion.—That day, indeed, I wished to conquer a propensity which I feared might lead to danger."

"You did not then pay my ransom?" demanded the knight.

"I

" I did not," replied Bertram.

" Nor employed the priest who paid it?"

" No."

" Neither then was the gold nor jewels your's."

Bertram laughed. — " If I recollect aright," answered he, " you once counselled me to shave my crown and turn confessor; I now return the advice, for that step is absolutely necessary before you enter on questions, nor will I answer further till you have adopted it."

" I confess myself outwitted," said the baron; " but hereafter, so please Heaven, we must strike the balance, Bertram.— Our pecuniary obligations shall be repaid —for those of friendship we must still remain thy debtors."

" Alas! my Lord, the pecuniary obligations, as you are pleased to call them, will be so much in your favour, that if you

you have not mercy, I must sink beneath the weight; for those of friendship I will pay you ten fold."

"Bertram," replied the baron, "I think not there be any affection lost between us; yet tell me honestly, and with that candour which distinguishes thee, why, as I know thou art not over supplied with gold, thou did'st not suffer me to borrow what was needful of Hamet."

"If I must answer interrogatories," returned the youth, blushing, "and confess what I had hoped to conceal, I could not bear that a man so dear to the Baron de Pointz as the Knight Fitz-Hugh, should own his liberation to any other than myself.—You will say it was a sacrifice I made to my pride, but I deny the accusation; it was an offering to friendship, I would bid for a place in the knight's heart, but that is not to be purchased with gold."

"Now,"

"Now," answered Fitz-Hugh, "could I willingly drub thee, but that the folly of my heart, a weakness I inherit from my mother, enervates my arm; contention is therefore useless, as I should but lose ground in the struggle, take therefore my hand, for I must love thee even in spite of myself."

Bertram took Fitz-Hugh's offered hand, —"I accept it with respect and affection," replied he, "henceforward I will regard the Knight Fitz-Hugh as my brother."

"Agreed, — but wherefore doth not Alan speak to me,—in what have I offended him?"

"In nothing," answered Bertram, "a weakness which, like you, I suppose he inherits from his mother, alone restrains him; there are times when the heart is most eloquent in silence, and as such consider his."

"And

"And so I will," returned he, approaching Alan and taking his hand, which he found trembling and cold, "why, my dear lad," continued he, "thou art weak as a girl, thou ha'st heard that there is a truce declared between thy saucy cousin and myself, wilt thou not also be my friend?"

"No one rejoices more sincerely to see you safe than I do," answered Alan, "and I truly hope ———"

"No hopes if thou lovest me, Alan," interrupted Fitz-Hugh, "I will be as good as I can.—Heaven keep temptation out of my way, and I will endeavour not to seek it, but I dare promise no further."

"Now," said the baron, "as all is adjusted to my wishes, let me intreat the company of Maynard to my tent; this is, I trust, the last day we shall pass in Palestine, and we will spend it together.—Jaques and Hamet doubtless wonder at our absence;

absence;—I would I could heal the sorrows of both, but as that I fear is impossible, let us at least join in the endeavour of alleviating the pangs of reflection for a short time."

Maynard accepted the invitation and all returned with the baron, in whose tent they found Jaques and Hamet expecting their arrival.

In the course of the day, Bertram, who was particularly attentive to Hamet, proposed to Jaques that they should jointly undertake to teach the Saracen the English language; a proposal he readily adopted after consulting Hamet, who accepted the offer with pleasure, saying, he would devote the whole time they should be on shipboard to the purpose of profiting by their instructions. Speaking afterwards on the subject to the baron only, Bertram remarked that he had formed the design with

with a double view, the first of which was that by employing their minds it might tend to divert the unhappiness that preyed on them; and secondly, by facilitating conversation with the Saracen, he might the more readily comprehend the Christian doctrine, which faith he anxiously longed to see him embrace.

The baron applauded his motives, and after passing the day in harmony and friendship, they separated for the night.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE ensuing morning all were busied in preparation, the tents were struck, and the boats from the vessels had been brought to the shore in order to convey the crusaders on board. As every thing had been in readiness for some days, by the hour of four in the afternoon, not more than an hundred remained for embarkation, the whole of whom were knights and soldiers.

The

The pilgrims had been first conveyed on board by order of the chiefs; an arrangement Bertram would fain have evaded, but was necessitated to submit to the general order, and therefore requested Hamet to accompany him.

The party was thus reduced, when a messenger and guard arrived from the cadi of Joppa, and demanded, in his name, to speak to the chiefs. Being ordered to approach, he informed them, by an interpreter, that his master had received certain intelligence the evening before, from one of the messengers who had transacted the business respecting the liberation of the knights, that Hamet, brother to the late vizier, Othman, was concealed in their camp, in an English habit. He, therefore, demanded him to be given up, or otherwise he must have recourse to force.

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"Of what crime do you accuse this man?" said the baron, by Jaques, "declare his guilt, and then we will reply to your demand."

"I am no judge," answered the messenger, "neither are you; he hath by some means offended the soldan, and that is sufficient."

"For you it may, but not for me," returned the baron, haughtily; "tell the cadi, I will be answerable that he shall never more offend the soldan."

"You refuse then to give him up."

"I do," answered the baron.

"Take the consequence, all is prepared, the cadi will not see the soldan's commands insulted, you shall speedily hear further."

So saying, the messenger and guard departed, when a consultation among themselves took place. The boats could not return in less than an hour, before which time elapsed, they might all be either slain

or

or taken prisoners;—neither then could the boats afford them any assistance, as they must first return to the vessel to procure men, all which would make so long a delay as to render their service fruitless.

The majority of the chiefs immediately agreed, that the only means of safety was to deliver up the Saracen, and accordingly were preparing to dispatch a guard to the gates of Joppa with a conciliating message; when the baron stepping forward exclaimed, —"Then must ye also give me up, for so prosper me Heaven, if I do not defend him while my hand can wield a sword, or my arm furnish strength to raise it.—This brave veteran," pointing to Jaques, "declares he will second me, as will also the knight, Fitz-Hugh; and though we are not mad enough to suppose we can conquer a force sent against us, at least we will sell our lives dearly,—for never shall it be recorded

of us, that we tamely surrendered a man who had thrown himself on our protection, and whom we hope to unite to our Christian brethren."

De Pointz paused, while universal dissatisfaction prevailed among the greater number of the chiefs; most of whom openly declared that they would not endanger their lives for an infidel, and peremptorily insisted on the cadi's demand being complied with.

"I am sorry," resumed the baron, "to see a want of charity among men who have left their country and friends on a mission so sacred as ours; and surely it is a want of that first of Christian virtues, which can make you for a moment think of yielding to so cruel a demand. Hamet is accused of no crime, and to yield him up would at once give his oppressors an assurance of our weakness and cowardice. Again I declare,

I will never consent, and heartily rejoice that he is safe on ship-board."

As he spoke, they discovered at a considerable distance a number of men approaching towards them, the glittering of whose weapons in the sun plainly testified their errand.—Again the chiefs insisted on a conciliatory message being sent to the cadi, which the baron as vehemently opposed, saying he would strike any man to the earth who bore so degrading a concession.

Jaques at that moment requested to be heard,—"Believe me," said he, "it is not only Hamet they seek, but flattered by the hope of rich ransoms, they merely want an excuse to make prisoners; therefore, might I advise, let us meet them as men, who trust not only to their bodily strength, but to the justice of their cause."

"Aye," added the baron, drawing his sword, and crossing a few paces from the party, "we will live or die like Christian soldiers, therefore let those who choose place themselves by my side.—In Palestine I have nearly exhausted my means, but, thank Heaven, in England and Normandy I am rich; and I here swear by the Virgin, to amply reward every soldier on our return, who now stands forward in this service."

De Pointz was universally beloved among the soldiers, for in danger he had ever been the foremost, nor had his hand or heart ever been closed against their necessities; a murmur was therefore heard among them, during which Jaques and Fitz-Hugh, with two young knights, took their places by his side, and in a moment after seventy soldiers drawing their weapons,

pons, with a cry of exultation joined them.

The baron uncovered his head,—"I thank you all, my brave and worthy friends," said he, "if we do not make those infidels run, I am content to leave my body unburied on their unhallowed and burning sands; but a better fate awaits us, we will teach them at once to respect and fear us, for they shall see that what we dare do we are ready to defend."

The Saracens by this time approached them, when the dissenting chiefs, and the few who adhered to them, consulted their own safety by joining the baron's party.

Thus arranged they advanced to meet the Saracens; Jaques observing to the baron, that although the number of the infidels doubled theirs, yet they were apparently collected in haste, and ill armed and disciplined.

The cadi led them on; and halting as the crusaders approached, he cried aloud to his people to level the deriders of the prophet with the dust. An immediate assault succeeded, in which, though the baron with Jaques and Fitz-Hugh were foremost, no man shewed a want of courage; for convinced that life and liberty were at stake, they resolved to hazard all to defend them. During the conflict de Pointz encountered the cadi, who cried aloud, "Have at thy heart, thou Christian dog!" at the same time raising his ponderous weapon to strike.

De Pointz during his stay in Palestine had collected enough of the language to comprehend his words; but unable to reply in the same tongue, answered in his own, "Have at thine, Infidel! and with thy dying breath curse thy false prophet, who could not better defend thee." As he

he spoke he caught the blow of his antagonist on his shield, and with his right hand plunged his sword in the Saracen's heart.

Jaques, with an activity and skill that neither time nor sorrow could destroy, cut his way through their ranks, followed by half the crusaders, spreading confusion and death around them; while Fitz-Hugh with a few men, gallantly prevented their retreat towards Joppa, lest they should spread alarm, and collect a larger force.

At that moment the boats approached the shore, to carry on board the knights and soldiers who remained; and seeing the confusion, to the number of twelve, immediately joined their brethren against the Saracens, who already scattered, and dispirited by the loss of the cadi, fled towards the adjoining wood to escape from their enemies.

The

The crusaders were too wary to lose time in pursuit, therefore collecting their wounded brethren, for they had not any slain, they placed them carefully in the boats, and prepared to hasten to their vessels; Fitz-Hugh observing, that if there had been but time, and he could have overcome the disgust he had to Saracen carcases, he should have liked to examine the cadi's pockets, in order to discover if he had any valuables that might reimburse Bertram.

As they approached the vessels, they saw the decks covered with pilgrims and soldiers, who ignorant of what had passed, shouted with joy on their appearance, as they now judged in safety. As they drew nearer the confusion among them caused alarm,—the heads of the chiefs were uncovered—their weapons were unsheathed —the habits of some were bloody—and others

others were employed in supporting the wounded. Among those who anxiously awaited their arrival was Hamet and Bertram; and who as the baron's boat reached their vessel, discovered that he was covered with blood. The youth gave a piercing shriek, and fell senseless on the deck; while Hamet, scarcely less alarmed, leaped into the boat to enquire the cause.—Jaques, however, for the present simply informed him that they had been attacked by the Saracens, but that he hoped no disastrous consequences would ensue.

By the baron's order, all those that were most dangerously wounded, were put on board the same vessel with himself; nor did he fail to assure all, that he would remember the promise he made in the hour of danger, and giving each a piece of money he left them.

In

In the mean time Maynard and Alan conveyed Bertram to his cabin, where after some time they succeeded in recovering him; when, in spite of persuasion, he again hastened on deck, where he found the baron warmly recommending the wounded men to the care of such as were in health.

The sound of the baron's voice revived his spirits; he rushed towards him, and grasping his hand in emphatic silence burst into tears.

"My dear boy!" exclaimed the baron, "amidst the disasters of this day, I have sincerely rejoiced that thou wert safe on ship board, I should have feared for thee more than for myself; but shame on thy tears, wilt thou never acquire the fortitude of a man?"

"Alas! never, I fear," answered he. "Say, are Jaques and Fitz-Hugh safe?"

"Both,

"Both, except a few Saracen scratches, which any old woman might cure by a plaister of bees wax and butter.—Some of our men are I fear more seriously wounded, but I trust not to death."

"My cousin and myself will attend to them, Maynard is skilful, and will look to their hurts."

The baron accepted the offer with thanks; and Maynard, assisted by some other of the pilgrims, speedily bound up their wounds, and placed them on their beds.

Tranquillity at length somewhat restored, the baron requested Maynard to look at his side, where he had received a deep cut, but by binding his vest tight against it had prevented much loss of blood. Bertram's alarm at this intelligence was renewed; and fearful of again giving way

to

to his weakness, he begged leave to retire while the wound was examined.

Maynard applied some balsam which the baron produced, as he did also to a wound which Jaques had in the arm.—. As for Fitz-Hugh, his hurts were so slight, that binding them up, they bid fair to be well in a few days.

It was not till the second morning after, and then with friendly caution, that Jaques related to Hamet the real cause of the contention which had taken place. The Saracen heard him with sorrow and gratitude; he lamented being the cause of their vexation, and vowed an everlasting friendship for the protection he had received.

In three days all were regarded out of danger, and even Bertram's fears began to subside. The weather was fine, but the wind so still that they advanced but slowly.

The

The resolution of Bertram to instruct Hamet, had been forgotten during the confusion of the first embarkation, but was again revived in the satisfaction of a general recovery. Hamet was an active and docile pupil; he had before been a close observer, and by the joint cares of his friends, made a proficiency which astonished all.

Touching on the coast of Sicily, they resolved to tarry a month there, to recruit the strength and compleat the cure of such as were wounded. At the time fixed upon for sailing, the winds proved adverse for nearly an equal period, and prevented their departure, during the whole of which delay and the time previous, Jaques with Bertram, and at intervals the baron, had been indefatigable teachers, and Hamet so attentive a scholar, that he comprehended all that was said, and could make himself

himself understood. Bertram had also introduced to his acquaintance the elder priest, who paid Fitz-Hugh's ransom, and with whom the youth informed the baron he had long been in habits of friendship.

"Aye," said Fitz-Hugh, who was present when he made the declaration, "I considered him as one of thy secret keepers; but, prithee, how do'st thou make it accord with thy sanctity, to tell such lies as thou did'st respecting my ransom?"

"I told no lies," replied Bertram:—"You asked me if I paid your ransom, I replied, I did not, which was strictly true. You next asked if I did not employ the priest who did, to which I also replied in the negative, for Maynard settled the whole business."

"If thou do'st not lie," said Fitz-Hugh, "at least thou can'st subterfuge rarely.

rarely.—I should like some day to catch thy wisdom tripping—thy overstrained virtue nodding—that would indeed cement our friendship, as it would, at once, bring us upon a level."

"True," replied Alan. "I recollect you remarked some time since, that in the service of the young and beautiful you were ever ready—grace and agility you have since found necessary to compleat the conquest—would you recommend the same to my cousin?"

"Peace, saucy-face!—Thou wer't formerly, Alan, one of the prettiest modest boys I ever knew, but latterly Bertram hath corrupted thee. In England I will take thee under my own peculiar care."

"My education would then indeed be compleat," answered Alan; "but, I thank you, I will remain as I am."

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE wind at length proving favourable, they again embarked, and enjoyed an agreeable voyage through the Mediterranean, then passing the Streights, crossed the Bay of Biscay, and arriving safely off the Land's-End, disembarked at the port of Penzance, in Cornwall.—During the voyage, they had the satisfaction to find Hamet daily more interested, and anxious respecting the Christian

Christian religion, and had no doubt but all their cares respecting him would be overpaid by his adoption of the true faith. The pilgrims who had joined them from France, Italy, or Germany, had separated from them in Sicily, embarking each in those vessels bound to the ports nearest their own country, so that out of eight ships which conveyed them from Palestine, but four returned to England, where, on landing, a second separation took place, the priests departing to their respective monasteries, and several of the pilgrims to their dwellings. Those who remained, weary with their voyage, proposed to recruit their strength before they proceeded, by a few days rest;—an opportunity the baron profited by to send Gregory to his domain in Hampshire with an order for such sums as had accumulated there during his absence.

Pitching

Pitching their tents, they gave way to the hilarity of their hearts in finding themselves at length in their native land. The baron had resolved to visit his estates in the southern countries, before he proceeded to the castle of Latimer, and would fain have persuaded Jaques and Hamet to accompany him;—but the first, anxious to see the only old friend he possessed, declared his intention to proceed to the county of Durham, in hopes of finding la Roche yet living, while Hamet, who was sincerely attached to him, entreated to accompany him. The baron then insisted that they should make the castle of Latimer their residence, till he joined them, a request they promised to comply with. For Bertram and his cousins, they received the same invitation, but declined for the present accompanying him; but agreed to meet him in the course of a month or six weeks,

weeks, on his return to the north, where he intended to repair at that period.

They had been on shore but two days, when suddenly the weather became extremely tempestuous, and they could not but regard with pious thankfulness the mercy of Providence, which had suffered them to reach the land before it took place.

The baron, with Jaques, Hamet, Bertram, and Maynard, stood on the shore and viewed with sorrow that the mariners' skill was useless; the vessels were the sport of the waves, thrown one moment to the clouds and the next precipitated into the abyss, while barrels, planks, chests, cordage, and divers pieces of wreck, dashing on the surface of the water, bore a mournful testimony of the fate of the vessels to which they had appertained.

On the land side the scene was scarcely less ruinous, the cottages of the villagers were

were unroofed by the hurricane, some nearly destroyed by the lightning, trees torn up by the roots, and universal desolation spread around. A sudden and piercing blast carried Bertram's hat into the sea, and his fine hair, let loose by the tempest, alternately fell on his shoulders or covered his dark but beautiful visage, as if to shield it from the storm.

Regardless of all but the scene before him, his hands and eyes were raised to Heaven, and his soul immerged in fervent but silent prayer, for all travellers both by sea and land; as also for the peace of such unhappy souls as might perish in the tempest.

His companions viewed him at once with wonder and admiration, the baron observing in a low voice to Jaques,—"By my life, the more I consider that youth, the less I can comprehend his character;

racter;—at times verging to almost feminine weakness, at others capable of the most noble efforts;—attentive and affectionate to his friends, but careless of himself."

As the baron spoke to Jaques, Maynard approaching Bertram entreated him to return to his tent, as his hair and garments were drenched with rain, and the violence of the storm still continued.

"Alas!" answered the youth, "shall I dare to think of the inconvenience of a wet cloak, when at the same moment so many of my brethren are yielding up their souls on the raging ocean; distant from their homes, their wives, and children.—Oh, may the horror of this hour expiate their transgressions!—May even a momentary expiation be acceptable to Heaven, and may the saints receive them into bliss!"

"The lightning increases," said the baron, "we will return to our tents, we are but useless spectators of horrors which we cannot alleviate;—give me thy arm, Bertram, for I will not go without thee."

Bertram obeyed, and as they returned towards their tents the storm suddenly began to subside; the black clouds which like billows rolled through the firmament in tremendous and awful majesty, were broken by the bright blue of Heaven,—the forked lightning faintly flashed amidst the distant hills, and the bursts of thunder were only heard in distant and dying murmurs,—while the sun, gilding the extremity of the clouds, appeared preparing to break forth, and by his cheering presence dry up the torrents of rain which had desolated the earth.

While the baron and his companions had been on the shore, Alan had remained in his father's tent, from a natural dread he had to thunder and lightning. After some time Fitz-Hugh, seeking for the baron, had joined him, and perceiving the horror the youth experienced from the storm, with friendly kindness had resolved to remain with him. It was in vain Alan endeavoured to struggle with his fears, every clap of thunder or flash of lightning appeared to strike him to the heart; he covered his head with his cloak, and repeatedly prayed Fitz-Hugh to leave him, but interested for him, though vexed at his weakness, he peremptorily refused.

At the time the tempest so fearfully encreased, affection appeared for a few moments to overcome Alan's dread, for

suddenly rising, he exclaimed,—"Selfish wretch that I am, where is my dear father, and where is my beloved ———"

As he spoke he rushed forward to leave the tent, but nature was not to be overcome, for a tremendous flash of lightning, followed by a harsh and grating peal of thunder, striking at once on his eyes and ears, he fell senseless, and to the opinion of Fitz-Hugh dead.

Though almost wild with alarm, for no assistance was immediately near, and to leave the youth in such a state impossible, he raised the body in his arms, and placing it on Maynard's couch which was near the opening of the tent, he snatched some water from the board and sprinkled his hands and face. His cares were, however, unavailing, and overcome by the sight, the giddy and facetious Fitz-Hugh could not restrain his tears.

He

He laid his face to that of the youth, and with rapture thought he felt breath, and eager that nothing should retard recovering animation, he tore off the strings which confined his cloak and vest over his neck and bosom, when a sight met his eyes which had nearly reduced him to the same state as that of the youth before him; for, instead of a boy, he discovered, by a bosom as fair as drifted snow, a woman, and one whom at that moment he considered as the most beautiful in the creation.

To his great joy it was evident life was returning, when he immediately endeavoured to replace her cloak and vest, that he might not alarm her. In a few minutes her senses were entirely restored, though the roses of her cheek had given way to the most deadly pale; yet discovering where he had placed her, and some disorder in her habit, a burning crimson replaced it,

and rising hastily she said,—"Why have you done this?—I will instantly seek my father;—neither Bertram nor him should leave me thus alone."

"In faith thou say'st true," replied Fitz-Hugh, "wert thou mine, I would fold thee to my bosom, and cherish thee more than life.—Nay, why that averted eye and blushing cheek, are we not friends?—I swear I love thee more than Bertram can. The little hypocrite!—I no longer wonder at his continence, with such a companion as thee all the dancing girls in the world might have gone to the devil."

Though the storm was but little decreased, the feigned Alan appeared to have met with a shock that surpassed all others; she burst into tears, and snatching her hand from Fitz-Hugh, ran, regardless of the tempest, in search of her father and Bertram.

Fitz-

Fitz-Hugh followed, in vain endeavouring to calm her agitation.—"My dear Alan," said he, "no, confound that name, tell me thy true one? it will be music to my ears, I shall repeat it twenty times a day.—I ever loved thee, though I could not define the motive, now 'tis explained."

"Leave me, thou hateful presuming man," replied she, "nor dare profit by an unhappy accident, to insult me."

"Hateful presuming man!" repeated Fitz-Hugh, "for the first I am sorry, for I would not wish to be hateful to thee;—for the latter thou knowest, sweet Alan, if I still must call thee so, that I promised not to seek temptation, but if thou wilt lay it in my way, am I to blame?—I merely thought thee a pretty boy, but now every glance discovers a fresh beauty;—by my life thou art an angel!"

"Heaven defend me, must I listen to such folly?—Oh, that I knew where to find my father or Bertram!"

"Pish, I will be both to thee. If old Maynard be thy father he *is* a villain; and for Bertram, out upon the specious young hypocrite, I could find in my heart to strangle him. Believe me, sweet girl, I am inclined to love thee; thou shalt share the fortune of a soldier, without deceit, without disguise—thou shalt appear in all thy native charms, decked with whatever my purse can procure."

"Be gone!" exclaimed she, "nor dare insult my virtue, nor poison my ears, with villanous calumnies against my father and cousin."

"Hum!" returned Fitz-Hugh. "I revere thy virtue so much, that I wish to take it into my own keeping. For thy father, I will not offend thee; but for that

that dog, Bertram, I pray thee think not of him—a boy, a green-horn, a moppet. Dress him in a bodice and a petticoat, and he would be a mere wench; a girl of thy understanding ought to be ashamed of such a lover."

"I am more ashamed of thee," retorted she; "and would sooner brave the horrors of ten tempests than see thy face."

"Why, my face is well," answered he, "and, truly, without vanity, so is my shape; nay, look at me, I am more able both to love and defend thee than Bertram."

She burst into tears.

"Nay, I pray thee now,—I cannot bear tears. I do not mean to insult thee, but I would that thou would'st love me. Thou art young, sweet girl, and I will think, betrayed; Bertram is more than

commonly specious, and for such a boy, the most finished deceiver and knave in nature. For Maynard I have no words, if, again I repeat, he truly is thy father."

"He is my father," sobbed she. "I pray you cease."

"And Bertram?" said Fitz-Hugh.

"My cousin. But I will not be questioned,—leave me."

"Leave thee, impossible!—I will never leave thee!—I will watch thee day and night—sleeping and waking I will be before thee;—I will guard thee from danger, and shelter thee in my bosom."

"Would to Heaven, that I were sheltered now from such impertinence.—Be assured my father and cousin will resent it."

"Resent what?—Guarding thee during the storm. For thy father I say nothing; but for thy cousin, a thing, a butterfly,—

out

out upon such a lover, to leave thee in the hour of danger. Cousin, i'faith," repeated he, "I know not a more comprehensive name in our language; in respect to relationship, there are cousins in the first, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth degree.—Of what line of consanguinity art thou and Bertram?"

"I will lose no more time in conversing with thee, thou rude man. Ah, Heaven be praised! yonder comes my cousin and the baron."

De Pointz, with Jaques and Bertram, at that moment appeared in sight, followed at some distance by Hamet and Maynard.

The fictious Alan flew rather than ran to meet them; and throwing herself into Bertram's arms, exclaimed, — "Oh, we are betrayed, my weakness and folly during the

the storm, hath discovered all to the Knight Fitz-Hugh!"

Bertram stood like one transfixed with lightning; no word escaped his lips, and had not the baron supported him he had fallen.

"Discovered, what!" exclaimed the baron, fixing his eyes with curiosity on Fitz-Hugh, "what, in the name of wonder, hast thou discovered that can cause such alarm?"

"Hark ye, Alan," said Fitz-Hugh, "I would speak to thee apart before I answer that question.—Wilt thou bribe me to keep thy secret? wilt thou be grateful for my forbearance?" added he, in a low voice.

"No, monster!" answered she, aloud, "disclose all thou knowest. — I despise thee!"

"Then,

"Then, in faith, thou must take the consequence—all shall out. Think again, consider:—Wilt thou not buy off the evidence?"

"I pray thee," said the baron, "do not jest, for something seriously affects Bertram.—Say, what hath happened?"

"Nay, not much, except that an angel, a goddess, hath accompanied us on this pilgrimage, under the form of Alan; and that Bertram, happy dog, was not so sanctified for nothing. Marry, no wonder he was always so content, so satisfied at home;—in his place I should have been so too."

"Thou art wild, mad," answered the baron, "I pray thee be serious."

"If I were wild, and mad also," replied he, "where would be the wonder, after such a discovery?—And that so lovely a woman should be in the possession of such

a boy, a ——— I pray thee find him a name, if thou knowest one that will suit his sanctity ?"

" Amazement!" exclaimed the baron, " I cannot believe it. Speak, Bertram, I conjure you, and deny what he advances."

Bertram, somewhat recovered, had listened attentively to what had passed; and endeavouring to master his confusion and collect his spirits, he replied, though with evident hesitation,—" It is most true, my Lord,—I plead guilty."

" Guilty!" repeated the baron, with astonishment, " guilty!—Do'st thou then indeed confess that Alan is a woman?"

" Even so, my Lord."

" Then," returned the baron, " art thou the most compleat knave in the universe—the most abominable deceiver ! A boy, almost a child; what wilt thou not be

be capable of when thou becomest a man?"

"Nay, I know not, but I pray you spare me now; in an hour, or when you please, I will reply to your questions, at present I am unable.—Let it suffice, that I alone am to blame,—no disgrace rests upon Maynard or his daughter."

"No disgrace!" repeated the baron. "Shameless boy! thou can'st not fool me now. I blush to confess that I considered thee as somewhat more than mortal—a creature so perfect, as almost to partake of the perfection of angels.—Why hast thou deceived me thus?"

"I feel afresh that I have lived too long," said Jaques; "had the world combined to swear this, I would not have believed it. Nothing, boy, but thy own testimony could force me to credit it."

Bertram

Bertram made no reply, but clasped the hand of the weeping Alan; and Maynard, with Hamet, at that moment joining them, the displeasure of the baron found a fresh object.

"Fie upon thee, old man!" said he, "art thou not ashamed, if that woman be thy daughter, (pointing to Alan) to act the pander to her?—Youth may furnish some excuse for her, but what can palliate thy guilt?—Or indeed Bertram's, whose green years are gifted with the understanding of age; but which he hath prostituted to the most vile purposes, under the hypocritical mask of sanctity."

Maynard appeared equally as confused as his daughter or Bertram had before done; and was on the point of making a reply, when the youth approaching him, first spoke in a low voice, then said aloud, —"We will answer no questions now; if the

the baron wishes further information, we are to be found, and are ready to give it."

So saying, with a forced, though dignified calmness, he placed the arm of Maynard's daughter within one of his own, and with the other took that of the old man, and left the presence of the baron.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

"CONSUMMATE effrontery!" exclaimed de Pointz, "I can even yet scarcely believe the evidence of my senses. Where is the priest whom Bertram called his friend?—I pray ye let us seek him."

"He departed yesterday," replied Jaques; "I was present when he took leave of Hamet, whom he promised to see again some time hence."

"Know

"Know ye to what monastery he belongs?"

"No, simply that he was a Franciscan. Bertram hath doubtless deceived him as well as the rest; though in spite of appearances, I can even yet scarcely think him guilty."

"Do you judge of him by yourself?" said Fitz-Hugh. "He says he is nineteen; at that age were you sufficiently chaste to have so lovely a girl continually at your elbow without remembering her sex?"

"It is too plain, too infamous," said the baron, "I could despise myself for being so grossly deceived.—I owe the young knave my life too, a remembrance that will render it almost hateful to me."

"And

"And I my freedom, a circumstance yet more humiliating," answered Fitz-Hugh.

"Not so," answered the baron, "all shall be repaid;—even this night thou shalt not sleep in his debt,—we will borrow of our friend Hamet."

"Welcome shall you be," replied the Saracen, as readily as he could explain himself, "appearances are often deceitful; —Bertram, I think, cannot be guilty of what you suspect,—he is too young, too good to be so abominable an hypocrite,— could I believe it, the Christians must, indeed, be lessened in my estimation."

"For one bad youth would you judge all?" answered Jaques, "never in my life did I before witness such a deceiver; I could have pledged my soul upon his truth and honour."

"And

"And I also," added the baron, "my affection for him appeared rooted in my heart, nor can I now pluck it out without anguish."

More discourse passed, and though all were so partial to Bertram as to wish to think him innocent, yet it was impossible, his unchastity, deceit, and hypocrisy, were too evident to admit a doubt.

In the mean time, Maynard, with his daughter and Bertram had retired to their tent, where the latter, after some time, succeeded in calming the agitation of both;—and resolving on the mode of conduct they should adopt, they quietly awaited either a message, or the personal appearance of the baron, whom they had no doubt they should see, or hear from. They were not deceived, in the

the evening, accompanied by Jaques, Hamet, and Fitz-Hugh, he entered their tent, where he found Bertram, as was his usual custom, reading the evening service to his companions.

The baron endeavoured to consider him with disgust, but the effort was unavailing; for even as he then regarded him, he thought that dignity and honour sat upon his open brow, and turning towards the partner of his guilt, the ingenuous blush of modesty flushed her cheeks.

Fitz-Hugh first spoke, — "Bertram," said he, "I come to return the gold thou paid for my ransom, and can but remain thy debtor for the loan."

As Bertram made no attempt to take the gold, which Fitz-Hugh held towards him, the knight placed it on the board. The youth made no reply, but struggling with his feelings, preserved a calm and lofty demeanour,

demeanour, though his eyes, in spite of his efforts, were bathed in tears.

"Bertram," said Jaques, "if it be possible, I conjure thee, by some means, lessen this heavy accusation against thee; thou hast partial judges, ready to listen, and, if it be possible, to palliate thy faults."

"Aye, my dear boy," added Hamet, in his broken language, "I pray thee do!—Come, thou art not guilty, or, if thou art, thy youth hath been ensnared by this old man and his daughter."

"Not so, my dear and worthy friends," replied Bertram, "for such you all are and ever must be to me.—If there be fault on any side, it is on mine, I am the offender, Maynard and his daughter the offended."

"Art thou wedded to her?" said Jaques.

"No."

"Do'st thou love her?" added he.

"Truly,

"Truly, most sincerely."

"Is your love mutual?" demanded the baron.

"Ask the maid."

"Hum!" said Fitz-Hugh.

"Do'st thou love Bertram, young woman?" asked Jaques.

"As my life,—not my father is dearer to my heart than Bertram."

"Happy varlet!—By mine honour, I envy him," said Fitz-Hugh.

"Wilt thou wed her?" asked the baron. "We are unacquainted with thy circumstances, but I take on myself the care of thy establishment."

"I am ready to wed her this instant if she be willing," answered Bertram; "for your second offer I have no need."

"A priest can be got speedily," said Jaques, "if none remain with the escort; —doubtless there is some convent in the vicinity.

vicinity.—Let one be sought, and this disagreeable business terminated."

"I am not in such haste to wed," replied Maynard's daughter, "and will, therefore, take time to consider on this business."

"Astonishment!" exclaimed the baron, "not wed him, after what has passed! then, indeed, must I think thee a wanton, who, profiting by his youth and inexperience, hath beguiled him into thy toils."

"My child is no wanton, my Lord," replied Maynard, "and great as you are, and humble as we are, the time may come when you may ask her pardon for the assertion."

"I would it were come now," returned the baron, "for I would be slow to judge, and ready to confess myself wrong, could I find cause."

As they conversed Fitz-Hugh by degrees had contrived to place himself by the side of Maynard's daughter.—"Thou art provokingly handsome," said he, addressing her in an under tone; "I would that Bertram were at the devil. Thou hast shewn thy understanding in refusing to give him thy hand; yet, though I wish it not, it might have been the most prudent step to preserve thy reputation, for, after what has happened, who else will wed thee?"

"I know not," answered she, in the same tone, "unless you take pity on me, noble knight.—I should prefer you to Bertram for a husband.—More strange things have come to pass."

"I do not believe it," replied he.—"To be sure, if thou should'st need a new friend, I should be obliged by the offer,—but marriage is another thing—an old fashioned

fashioned compact which needs so many formalities to make it passable, that I shall never adopt it. I pray thee take my word, thou shalt find me a man of honour."

"I will not trust you," answered she, "nothing less than marriage, with all the old fashioned formalities affixed to it, will satisfy me."

"Thou art so unreasonable that it is impossible to comply with thy demands;—no man, after marriage, is secure from horns, but a *wise* man will never adopt them before hand."

"Mean you yourself?"

"Aye, truly;—am I not wise?"

"Hum."

"Now, were there not so many witnesses, would I revenge myself for such sauciness.—In faith, thy humour suits me well; what sayest thou to mine?"

"It might be bearable," answered she, "confined and tamed in the trammels of matrimony; but without that it would be insufferable."

"By my life, sweet Alan, for so I must still call thee, so well do I like thy beauty, manners, and spirit, that if thou wert what I could in honour make my wife, I would not hesitate, but take thee for good and all.—To be sure, we should not abound in wealth, but we should be merry beggars,"

The baron, who had continued his discourse with Bertram, then said,—"Our acquaintance must end here. I would we had never met,—for, Bertram, never can I forget thee;—for thy sake, I shall suspect all mankind.—Yet one offer I will make, leave this old man and his daughter, thou see'st she loves thee not."

"She says otherways, my Lord."

"Infatuated

"Infatuated, foolish boy! doth she not refuse to wed thee?—I should not wonder if she were, even now, spreading her snares for Fitz-Hugh."

"In faith, my Lord, if she does, she will assuredly catch me;—why should you envy me my good fortune, if it were even so."

"Good fortune!" repeated the baron, with contempt, "in faith thy folly might be proverbial."

"Dear Bertram," said Jaques, "I pray thee take the baron's advice;—from the scattered remains of my fortune, I trust to be still able to afford thee a secure and honourable asylum.—Consider, that by thy imprudence thou hast insulted the church, and the holy mission to Palestine; and should it be discovered, both wealth and power may be necessary to protect thee."

"I have no fear," replied the youth, "my motives were pure, nor can I ever repent them."

"We but lose time," interrupted the baron, impatiently, addressing Jaques, "you see he is resolved on destruction, let us retire; yet again I repeat, that should'st thou hereafter see thy folly, thou shalt not need the means to lead thee back into the paths of rectitude."

"Say," added Jaques, "where is thy home?—Still, ungrateful boy, must I be interested for thee."

"Bertram," said Hamet, "it was thy apparent piety, that first made me waver in my faith; if such are Christians, thought I, who would not be a Christian?—I listened to divine tenets, rendered doubly interesting, because in thee I considered them realized. I attended to the priest whom thou recommended, and my reason was nearly

nearly convinced, when thou hast again raised doubts in my mind."

The words of Hamet, though brokenly expressed, appeared to affect Bertram beyond any which had yet passed; he paused a moment, and then replied, with an energy that struck forcibly on the minds of all—"I conjure you, as you value the peace of your own soul, and also that of mine, that you firmly persevere.—We shall, be assured, shortly meet again;—remember that you have adopted me, and I claim and demand that you retract not that promise, and three months from this period, I swear, if I be living, to take no decisive step, as to my future life, without your express concurrence.—Even now I consider you a Christian, though some of the outward forms be wanting;—therefore, I pray you, bless me, and pray the Virgin

to support and guide me in a trial I have to undergo?"

As Bertram spoke, he bent his knee before the Saracen, who, moved even to tears, exclaimed,—"Beloved boy, if my prayers can find place, may thou be blessed; in spite of appearances, against my reason, I endeavour to think thee innocent."

"I thank ye," replied he, then rising and turning to Jaques and the baron, he added, "may Heaven guide you; I cannot longer bear this scene, my heart is rent in pieces;—at least give me your hands at parting, and remember me in your prayers."

Jaques gave him his hand, saying,—"Alas, Bertram, I fear thou art in a labyrinth that will beguile thee to thy destruction!"

Bertram sighed, but made no reply, and timidly approaching the baron, who endeavoured to regard him with coolness, he said,

said,—"My Lord, I will not commend myself to your memory, for you swore affection to me at the holy altar of St. John; I have, therefore, no fear, for religion and honour unite to render the promise sacred."

"I need no remembrancer," returned he, "outward forms alone have not bound me to thee; and so prosper me Heaven, if I would not at this moment give a third of my wealth to be assured thou wert what I yesterday thought thee."

"Give me then your glove," said Bertram, "when I can shew myself before you, bold in conscious innocence, I will wear it in my cap, till when I will place it next my heart."

"Take my ring," answered the baron, "and when thou canst return it, bold, as thou sayest, in conscious innocence, demand of me what thou wilt, I swear by my

honour to grant it.—I grieve that thou hast rent our love asunder; the follies of youth I can pardon, but dissimulation and hypocrisy I detest."

"We will drop the subject," replied Bertram, "I will only your glove, it will ensure your promise as much as gold or diamonds, which would have no value with me, but as having appertained to you; and this glove," taking that of the baron which was in his hand, "hath all the advantages I wish. And now," continued he, after a pause, his voice interrupted by his emotion, "may every blessing attend you, may the Virgin guide you by day, and the saints watch over your slumbers; and may every one you honour with the name of friend, love you like Bertram."

The baron was overpowered; for a moment he forgot his anger, and as the youth raised his hand to his lips, he fell on his

his neck and embraced him. Bertram drew back, with dignity,—"My Lord," said he, "you forget yourself, by embracing one whom you judge guilty of errors which I shame to repeat."

As he spoke, he turned from de Pointz, and rushing into the interior, threw himself on the couch and sobbed aloud.—Maynard's daughter followed him, when the baron and his friends, who regarded the old man with abhorrence, immediately left the tent.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ON quitting Bertram, Jaques and Hamet had retired to rest, and the baron and Fitz-Hugh being alone, the first, after a pause, exclaimed,—"By my life I am half inclined to inform the church of the villany of that old man, and of the guilt of his abandoned daughter;—yet, on consideration, the life of the first would be forfeited, and Bertram might share his fate.—For the

the woman, a strict conventual life would be her mildest punishment, and what I could wish to inflict."

"Then is your heart composed of harder materials than mine," answered Fitz-Hugh, "why she is as handsome as an angel.—I cannot blame Bertram, for who could have withstood such temptation?—Not I, in faith, and therefore I cannot join in his condemnation.—His affected piety, forbearance, and modesty alone provoke me."

"Fitz-Hugh," said the baron, "even now, in their tent, I observed thee conversing with the young Circé. I know thou art not immaculate, and I warn thee beware of her arts, and regard her as a viper who would sting thee to death."

"I possess an antidote against such stings," answered he, "and between ourselves,

selves, I do not think she hates me, for I have been recalling several circumstances to my memory, which corroborate the supposition,—as her uneasiness when I went to the dancing wenches, her blushes, her trembling hands when she timidly welcomed my return, and a thousand other little instances, which I cannot at this moment enumerate."

"Thou would'st for ever forfeit my good will, should'st thou add to the number of her fools.—Thee I could not pity, thy age and knowledge of the world should guide thee;—for Bertram 'tis otherwise, thrown even a child amidst temptation, he is an object of compassion."

"And would it not then be an act of charity, to endeavour to break a connection so injurious to his youth and morals?—For me, as you truly say, I have attained the

the age of wisdom, and my morals are too firm to be corrupted."

"Thou hast, indeed," replied the baron, peevishly, "attained the climax of folly, and, I grieve to say, hath no mastery over thy passions.—I pray thee see them no more."

"I cannot promise that. I did not bid them farewel, for the poor boy was so surrounded, that I could not bear to encrease his vexation,—and he must regard me as the cause of his disgrace."

"'Tis for his sake then, that thou meanest to go?"

"Aye, for his, and also for that of Maynard's daughter. I cannot lie, de Pointz, and though I would seduce no man's wife, or daughter, yet I consider *her* as fair game, and she is exactly to my taste; though jesting apart, never did

I see more apparent modesty, than she testified on the discovery I made. Her cheeks were crimsoned with blushes, her eyes alternately sparkled with anger, or were drowned in tears; and regardless of the storm that had before appalled her senses, she flew from me, as from a monster who sought to devour her. Now if any means could be used to snatch them from destruction."

"The attempt is vain, the unfortunate boy is bent on ruin," answered the baron. "Doubtless he hath been from infancy in the old villain's hands; who, for purposes, which we cannot at present fathom, hath formed this connection. Bertram it is plain hath possessed wealth, which in order to share, the miscreant hath prostituted his daughter."

"Tis

"'Tis probable," returned Fitz-Hugh, "yet I wonder he did not prefer to unite them by indissoluble ties; and surely it was a strange whim which could influence him to make them his companions to Palestine."

"It indeed appears so; but I will retire to rest, and endeavour to forget them. As speedily as possible we will away to my castle in Hampshire; Jaques and Hamet will proceed to the north, nor shall I be satisfied till we join them there."

Fitz-Hugh wished the baron a good repose and they separated for the night.

At the hour of breakfast, Jaques and Hamet alone met the baron; Fitz-Hugh had early left his couch, and taken the way to Bertram's tent. The levity of his temper

temper covered a feeling heart; and though his ransom had been repaid, he could not forget the obligation. He had no doubt of Bertram's guilty connection with Maynard's daughter; yet he considered his youth, and resolved if possible to save him from ruin. He had always been pleased with Alan; the strangeness of the discovery, his suspicion that she was partial to him, which appeared confirmed by her refusal of Bertram, all conjoined to interest him in her favour, and to influence him, independent of impure motives, to stand forth a friend to both.

Reaching their tent, and finding all still within, as buried in sleep, his ardour suddenly cooled, as he conjectured, that daring in vice, they still continued together. He paused, and had resolved to turn back, and to conceal his intention from

from even the baron, when some one speaking within attracted his notice. It was Bertram soothing his female companion, who, by her voice, appeared to have been weeping. — "My beloved friend," said the youth, "I pray thee bear a little longer with patience; a short time must now decide my fate, which be it what it may, I will endeavour to make thee happy. In spite of his levity, I am convinced Fitz-Hugh loves thee; and though I have not sufficient for greatness, I have still enough to procure thee ease and competency."

"Speak not so unkindly," replied she; "from infancy have not our hearts been united, and whatever be your fate I will share it. I pray you pardon this weakness, but indeed the contemptuous looks of Jaques and the baron struck me to the heart;

heart;—for Fitz-Hugh, though he vexed me, he did not wound me so deeply."

"He hath a merry heart," answered Bertram; "this business, I could wager, will hereafter afford him rare sport.—I would we were as secure of the baron."

A pause ensued.

"So," said Fitz-Hugh, mentally, "I have made a precious discovery; listeners seldom hear any good of themselves. *In spite of his levity, I am convinced Fitz-Hugh loves thee,*" recalling Bertram's words. "Now have I a strong inclination to pounce upon the impudent varlet, like a hawk upon a rook, for I cannot call him a pigeon. He hath selected me, I suppose, to use like a plaster, to heal the wounds of her character. Confound him, the baron he thinks would do still better. I can bear no more, I will take him in his guilt,

guilt, and let my honour sleep for the disgrace of listening."

Thus resolved, he rushed into the tent, his face flushed with anger, and stood before Bertram and Maynard's daughter, who were seated alone at the breakfast board.—Both screamed at the sudden interruption, and in silent though trembling expectation awaited what was to follow.

"I come," said he, addressing Bertram, "to thank thee for thy kind intention, but to beg leave to decline it.—I am no botcher of reputations, no easy gull for such things as thee to play upon.—If I knew on which of my features *fool* was so legibly written, as to make thee suppose it possible, by my soul, I would mar it, or conceal it with a mask. For thee," continued he, turning to Maynard's daughter, with encreased acrimony, "share his fortune,

tune, be united to him in hypocrisy, disgrace, and infamy; I care not, for I hate, detest, and disclaim thee for ever."

Maynard's daughter made no reply, but unable to support the insult, sobbed aloud, and threw herself on Bertram's bosom; while Fitz-Hugh continued,—"The baron's rich revenues might indeed have suited ye better, than the low fortunes of such a poor knight as myself; but he shall know *your* designs, and *my* weakness, which even led me here this morning, unknown to him, to see if it were possible to save ye both from destruction."

As he spoke he rushed towards the opening of the tent, when Bertram, in a voice of frenzied alarm, exclaimed,—"Stop, I conjure you, if you have the heart of a man, unless you mean to destroy me!—Give me a moment's pause. My brain is driven to distraction!"

"Nothing

"Nothing can extenuate your conduct —words will but aggravate your guilt.— Could you select no one but de Pointz or myself for your dupe?"

"You have misconceived," said Bertram. "For the love of Heaven, do not exasperate the baron still more against me; never did I entertain a thought of injuring either him or you."

Fitz-Hugh laughed ironically.—"Thou observed truly," said he, "that it would hereafter afford me rare sport; in faith, it doth now, to think that thou should'st expect to tack that witch upon my back, that pilgrim tramper. Out upon thee," added he, turning to her, "where is the modesty of thy sex? — Art thou not ashamed of thy doublet and cloak?"

Alan wept without reply.

"I pray you do not weep, my kind friend," said Bertram. Then turning to Fitz-

Fitz-Hugh, he added, "Did you, Sir Knight, know the truth, you would blush thus to aggravate sorrow. Alas! I have plunged myself beyond all power of retracting; and have not courage to make an avowal which would strike you dumb."

"I am now proof against thy arts; though even this morning my utmost wish was to serve thee. I felt that I owed thee a debt of gratitude, not only on my own account, but for preserving the baron, and came to make a proposal, which I had hoped to persuade thee to adopt; but thou art too lost, too abandoned, ever to be amended."

"I trust not, therefore, I pray you, tell it me."

"I should but lose my words.—First then, I wished to snatch thàt devoted girl from the power of her abandoned father, by placing her in a convent, where she might

might remain for life, or till she became of riper years, and was sensible of the magnitude of her folly. Thee," added he, to Bertram, " I wished to persuade to take a voyage to Normandy, where I have a small patrimony, which, if thou art honest, thou art welcome to share;—there thou art unknown, and, by future good conduct, might regain a respectability which thou hast justly forfeited."

" Speak you this from your heart?" said Bertram.

" Aye, from my soul," returned he, " darest thou doubt my word?"

" Pardon me."—Then, after a pause, he added,—" But say, suppose I accept your offer, will you not remove Alan during my absence?"

" No, by my life and honour, I will not even see her, such shall be the commands when she enters the convent;—neither

shalt thou nor her father, for three years, at which period, if she be so inclined, she may take the vows, or otherways I will prevail on the baron to give her a portion sufficient to preserve her from want or disgrace."

Bertram arose, he approached the knight, —"I am convinced thou art honourable," said he.—Then hesitating a moment, he added, "I will place more than my life in thy hands;—say, wilt thou be my friend and counsellor?"

Fitz-Hugh hesitated.

"Will you not advise me,—will you not pity while you condemn?" continued Bertram.—"More than once I have resolved to open my heart to Jaques, but timidity and shame restrained my tongue."

"Why not to the baron?" said Fitz-Hugh, "thou hast pretended to esteem him

him beyond all men.—Away with such subterfuges."

"I use none,—I could not meet the baron's eye during the disclosure.—If thou wilt be my friend, say so;—if not, 'tis done, I will press thee no farther."

"Friend," repeated Fitz-Hugh, "is a name I dare not use on every slight occasion, yet, if thou wilt act uprightly, be assured I will advise thee for what I consider best;—and more, I pledge my word to disclose nought thou mayest wish to conceal."

"Enough, I will prove that I dare trust thee;—tarry but till Maynard returns, and thou shalt be satisfied."

"Away with the old deceiver, his sight is hateful to me."

"Not your own father was more honest than mine," returned the feigned Alan,

" though he might be higher in the world's estimation."

" For the present form no decided judgment," added Bertram, " hasty conclusions are often erroneous.—Maynard is but gone to see some horses which we mean to purchase for our journey."

As the youth concluded, the old man entered the tent, and bowed to Fitz-Hugh who did not return the salute.

" Dear cousin," said Bertram, addressing him, " I was surely born to give you trouble which I can never repay, I have formed a resolution, a hasty one perhaps, but I am determined,—it is to declare our real situation to the Knight Fitz-Hugh."

" You know best," replied Maynard, " often have I wished you to place such a confidence in the noble Jaques;—he hath years and experience and would advise you well."

" Aye,"

"Aye," answered Bertram, "but the severity of honour sits upon his brow, and though I truly love him, I should sink beneath his frown;—the Knight Fitz-Hugh will not judge me by such rigid rules."

"Do not flatter yourself," said the knight, "if I can serve you I will;—at least be assured I shall not injure you."

"Will you keep our secret even from the baron?" demanded Bertram.

"So it be not to injure him, if otherwise the promise is void."

"Come then," said Bertram, with forced cheerfulness, "Maynard lead your daughter,—we are desperate gamesters, but we hazard for a noble stake.—The interior of our tent is most private, thither you shall retire;—but first, good cousin, I pray you look round that we be not surprised."

"And that there be no listeners," added the old man's daughter.

Fitz-Hugh made no reply, and Maynard having seen that all was quiet without, Bertram said,—"My good friend, you must be our historian, Alan the council, Fitz-Hugh the judge, and myself the culprit;—yet to hear my folly recapitulated would be so severe a punishment, that I must entreat to wait without while you make the disclosure."

So speaking, he drew back the tapestry and admitted Fitz-Hugh with Maynard and his daughter into the interior of the tent, while himself remained without.

Bertram continued alone, his eyes were raised to Heaven, the tears streamed down his cheeks, and folding his cloak about him, he appeared buried in reflection for almost half an hour, when Fitz-Hugh suddenly rushed out; his features bore the marks

marks of astonishment, his cheeks were pale, his hands trembled, and respectfully approaching the youth, he would have knelt at his feet.

Bertram stretched out his hand to prevent him;—he could not speak, his bosom appeared to swell to almost suffocation, and taking the offered arm of Maynard's daughter, who had followed Fitz-Hugh, they re-entered the tent, where the knight tarried with them till the sun had marked the hour of noon.—On his departure, as he bade them farewel, Bertram said,—"*Remember!*"

To which Fitz-Hugh emphatically answered,—"As I remember thee, so may Heaven hereafter remember me."

CHAPTER XL.

THE pilgrim Jonas, who first found the chronicles of Christabelle de Mowbray, had remained with the few who stayed to recruit their spirits and strength, before they departed to their respective homes. He had also another incentive. The baron, though he would not at the time give him the reward which Bertram refused to accept, had frequently assisted him with trifling sums, and had given leave to his followers

followers to supply him with food and raiment; so that by insensible degrees, he had been admitted a subaltern among them, an advantage that he was not inclined to relinquish, if he could avoid it. He performed errands for the domestics, and even sometimes the baron himself would employ him: an honour which though he thought highly of, that did not entirely content him, for he ignorantly conceived, that if he had not unfortunately sold the chronicles to Bertram, he should have been admitted into the same habits of intimacy with the baron which that youth enjoyed. De Pointz had also once struck him on Bertram's account, an event that encreased his dislike to him, although he did not dare openly to avow it, and ever appeared the most zealous to obey his commands.

Though the sex of Alan was discovered to the baron and his friends, the secret reached no farther; they all being resolved to conceal it, lest the church might take cognizance of the atrocity of the deceit, and bring the parties to punishment,—a circumstance which would have given them the utmost concern.

It was near the hour of dinner when Fitz-Hugh returned to the baron's tent, who coldly welcomed him, but forbore to mention the pilgrims. Jaques and Hamet were less scrupulous, both enquired after them, adding, they had no doubt that he had seen them.

"You have judged truly," answered he, "I left them but now; they mean to depart at early dawn to-morrow. Bertram prays you all to remember him; and trusts even yet to recover your friendship."

"He

"He deceives himself," answered the baron. "True it is that I can never forget him, but never more will I entertain a friendship for so specious a young deceiver. Never more will I suffer a weak partiality to influence my judgment at first sight; for he, notwithstanding the darkness of his complexion, hath the face of an angel, though his heart is deceitful as that of a fiend. Yet Heaven forefend that poverty should make him encrease the measure of his guilt, therefore, I pray you, tell him, if you see him again, that my purse is at his command;—I do not forget my obligation to him."

"I will," answered Fitz-Hugh; "but the repayment of my ransom, he says, hath amply supplied him."

"And whither goes he?" said Jaques.

"For the present, to some part of the country unknown to me. I made him an offer

offer of retiring for a time to the small patrimony left me in Normandy by my uncle."

"That thou might take the girl to thyself," interrupted the baron. "Fie on thee, Fitz-Hugh!"

"You wrong me, my Lord," replied he, seriously; "I wished to place her in a convent, where neither Bertram, her father, nor myself could have access to her."

"Thy mind is then strangely changed," answered de Pointz; "but yesterday, if I remember right, thou said it would be a shame to put so beautiful a creature into a convent."

"I confess it,—wise men seldom speak all they think—fools usually speak more; therefore, I pray ye, place the words to my lack of understanding."

"A sudden fit of modesty hath overtaken thee," replied the baron, "thus to underrate

underrate thy talents.—But say, I pray thee, did Bertram accept thy offer ?"

" Not immediately, he gave me some reasons which force him for a time to decline it;—hereafter I know not."

" A convent would not suit his shameless companion, I judge," said Jaques.

" For the present she accompanies young Bertram."

" I supposed so," interrupted the baron. " I pray ye, let us talk of them no more; I grieve that Fitz-Hugh should disgrace himself by holding converse with them."

" I had flattered myself," replied Fitz-Hugh, " that the Baron de Pointz knew me better;—when I stoop to degrade myself, I will cease to intrude on his presence."

" Pardon me," said the baron, " I meant not to offend ; I do know thee true and honourable, but dread to see thee ensnared by a wanton."

" There

"There is no danger.—Let us, as you proposed, drop the subject."

The dinner being served prevented more discourse. The whole party appeared out of spirits, and Fitz-Hugh so particularly reflective, that it could not pass unnoticed; and scarcely had he risen from the board, than he proposed to retire.

"Thou art not well," said the baron, "thou hast lost thy appetite.—Hath ought vexed thee?—Speak, are we not worthy thy confidence?"

"I am well, nor hath any thing vexed me; and so worthy do I hold you of my confidence, that I possess not one thought respecting myself, but what I could wish you to know."

The conversation then became more general, but Fitz-Hugh still appeared absent; and at length hastily rising, he said, —"I

—"I am but sad company, I will walk awhile, and I trust shall return better."

So saying he left the tent, before they could reply; and judging from his manner that he wished to be alone, no one attempted to follow him.

"Somewhat material must surely have happened to Fitz-Hugh," said Jaques; "never did I witness so sudden an alteration."

"What arts Bertram hath used I know not, but the change originates from him," replied the baron.—"That lad is a basilisk, which can fascinate at pleasure."

"I fear, with you, that Fitz-Hugh is partial to Maynard's daughter," said Jaques; "yet surely, as he knows she is a professed wanton, the inclination will be easily surmounted."

"Of that I have no doubt. Fitz-Hugh, though he may frequently rush into follies,

follies, his lapses will neither be dangerous nor lasting. I have known him from infancy, our boyish days were passed together, and I have ever found him generous, noble-minded, and brave. His levity conceals a humane heart; and that alone hath led him to hold any communication with Bertram."

"That youth's conduct hath encreased the weight on my spirits," said Jaques. "I could have loved him as a son; and at my age it is not pleasant to be the dupe of a boy."

"Youth, temptation, and ill-advisers, have all perhaps combined to betray him," said Hamet, as well as he could express himself; "I will yet hope he may make a brave man."

"Heaven grant it," answered the baron; "were he separated from Maynard and his daughter I should have some hopes, but

but you hear from Fitz-Hugh, that is not now to be expected."

Fitz-Hugh did not return till the evening was far advanced, when all forbore to mention the pilgrims; and the supper passed without the social conversation they were accustomed to hold.

On the ensuing morning Fitz-Hugh, as before, was absent. The baron appeared discontented and uneasy; he traversed the tent, looked anxiously out at the aperture, then sat down, and appeared lost in thought. The sun at length marked the hour of noon; Jaques and Hamet, lost in their own reflections, did not break on those of the baron, who again gazing from the outside of his tent, discovered at some small distance Jonas advancing towards him. The most trivial objects will sometimes

times break on painful reflections. — "Jonas," said he, "hast thou seen the Knight Fitz-Hugh?"

"I saw him some two hours since, so please you, my Lord," replied he, "as the pilgrim Bertram, and his cousins left the escort, to proceed on their journey."

"Are they indeed gone?" said the baron. "Peace rest with them!"

"They were all well, my Lord," answered Jonas.

"I trust so.—Knowest thou where is now Fitz-Hugh?"

"No, my noble master; when I saw him he was holding the stirrup, first for Bertram, then for his cousin, to mount their horses."

"Holding the stirrup!" repeated the baron, with a voice of astonishment, "what dost thou mean?—that was the office of a groom."

"So

"So I thought, my Lord; but as I know not the manners of courts, I judged it might be the fashion.—Bertram appeared in heavy sorrow, and the knight spoke words of comfort.—I tarried to see them depart, but the knight seeing me stand, bid me be gone for a knavish intruding varlet, or he would send me to the devil; so I was fain to go forward, least he should keep his word.—I however again loitered on the hill, from whence I saw them part. The knight shook hands with the old man, and stood fixed to the spot, watching them on their way, till they were lost in a distant turning of the road."

"Fitz-Hugh said truly," replied the baron patiently, "thou art a knavish intruding varlet, and I like thee not;—take that piece of gold and never let me see thee more."

Jonas would have endeavoured to extenuate the folly he had committed, but the baron

baron refused to hear him, and bid him be gone, in a voice not to be disobeyed.—. Re-entering his tent he conversed for some time with Jaques and Hamet, when they were joined by Fitz-Hugh, — "Bertram and his friends are gone, I understand," said Jaques.

"Aye, my good sir; but the youth prays you to judge as favourably of him as circumstances will permit, and to remember him in your orisons.—He also requests the same of the baron;—and to Hamet he hath enjoined me to return this precious rosary, till he can reclaim it with honour. He loved it, he requested me to say, not for the greatness of its value, but for the memory of the holy woman to whom it had originally appertained, and for the sake of the donor."

"Foolish boy," answered Hamet, "why would he act thus?—he should know I wish

wish to be his friend;—education hath made me regard his errors in a more lenient point of view than the rest of his friends, though I readily conceive that he hath acted contrary to his faith."

"Name him no more, let us endeavour to forget him," said the baron.

"Do so," returned Fitz-Hugh, "and Heaven speed him."

"Amen in all good resolves," answered Jaques; "still I repeat, my heart in spite of my reason is with him."

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XLI.

SOME days after Gregory returned, having used the utmost dispatch. He brought the baron's revenues from his castle, in Hampshire, and was accompanied by fifty vassals on horseback, accoutred in blazoned habits, to attend their lord;—they also led chargers for the baron and his friends.

All being prepared, it was resolved to delay their departure no longer than was necessary for the repose of the domestics, and

and to recruit the strength of the beasts. The baron ordered one half of the escort to attend on Jaques and Hamet, but both peremptorily declined the offer; he however insisted they should retain about them to the number of ten, with whom, three days after, they took the road northward. Having arranged all business with the knights who remained, on the following morning the baron and Fitz-Hugh, with the vassals, began their journey to Hampshire, where they arrived in safety.

Almost a stranger to his country and domains, the baron, on his first visit, previous to his departure for Palestine, had been received with fear; but his stay, though short, had banished all dread but for his departure, for he had redressed the grievances of the poor, and curbed the power of the rich who oppressed them. In the great hall of his castle every morning he

he was to be seen surrounded by his vassals, lending a ready ear to their respective requests, and relieving their wants with a liberal hand.

The aged vassals he enabled to spend their days without labour. To the young maids he gave marriage portions; encouraged agriculture among the youths, and ordered them at intervals to be taught the use of arms, that should it be needful they might be prepared. The aged, who remembered the haughty repellent pride of his father, blessed Heaven for the change in the person of his son; while the lads contended for the honour of following him, and the maids, whenever they could find an opportunity, strewed flowers in his path.

The active and benevolent soul of de Pointz, though thus constantly employed, could not forget Bertram; he lamented that he had been deceived in his character, and

recalled

recalled many occasions when he considered his own judgment amended by the opinion of the youth;—he however forbore to mention him to Fitz-Hugh, and a fortnight passed during which all business was arranged, and he resolved to depart on his journey to the north.

Accustomed to Jaques, the company of the veteran appeared necessary to his comfort; while Fitz-Hugh, equally desirous to visit the castle of Latimer, of which he had heard so much, used every means in his power to hasten their departure.

In the mean time Jaques, with Hamet and their followers had reached the county of Durham. The depression of the first, to the great grief of the Saracen, appeared daily to increase; he ate scarcely sufficient to support life, and remained silent sometimes

for hours. Entering the domain of Latimer, he prayed Hamet, attended by their followers, to continue his way without him to the castle, as his first wish was to see la Roche, if he was yet living. Hamet acquiesced, and they separated, Jaques promising to meet him again in the course of a few hours.

A stranger to the customs of the country, Hamet for the first time felt the conduct of Jaques unkind, and proceeded to the castle of Latimer under evident depression of spirits. Though he was, as he judged, unexpected, the followers no sooner announced at the gates that a friend of the baron's was arrived, than the vassals shewed him every mark of respect and honour; they stood in ranks as he passed, bowing lowly, while the respectable dame Cicely awaited him at the portal, and led the way to an apartment where refreshment was speedily

speedily placed before him. He arrived at noon, and the evening came without the return of Jaques.—Cicely remarked his uneasiness, she prayed him to see the castle, and conversing with him in his imperfect English, appeared to divert his thoughts.—He asked how long she had served the baron, and being informed that she had passed more than nineteen years in the family, he asked if she knew Mary la Pole and her daughter Corally, for from the baron he had learned every circumstance respecting their residence at Latimer, and their subsequent death.

Cicely replied in the affirmative, adding many affectionate encomiums on both.

"Robert de Mowbray," said Hamet, "the spouse of Corally, was he also known to you?"

"No, my good Sir," answered she, "I became an inmate of the castle soon after

his departure for the Holy-Land. — I was nurse to his daughter, the Lady Christabelle."

"Then wear that jewel for her sake," answered the noble Saracen, drawing one from his finger, "she was my sister's daughter, and deeply do I now deplore her loss."

Cicely made no reply, but respectfully kissed the hand which presented the ring. Hamet then spoke of the baron's mother, in whose praise Cicely would never have been weary, but was interrupted by a priest from the monastery, who came with a message from Jaques and la Roche, requesting the immediate presence of Hamet.

He appeared astonished at the request, and immediately asked if Jaques was well.—The priest replied that he had been disordered, and that one of the fathers had found

found it necessary to take some blood from his arm, but that he was now entirely recovered.

Thus informed, Hamet immediately departed, and remained at the monastery till past midnight, when he returned with Jaques, who retired to rest; while his attentive friend took his place to watch by his side, a measure from which no persuasion could divert him.

At an early hour the veteran arose, and, accompanied by his friend, descended to the hall, where Cicely assisted in placing the breakfast. She stole a glance at the stranger, and thought him of a noble demeanour; but though his features bore the marks of sorrow and premature age, she could not discover that overwhelming grief which the vassals who attended on him had informed her appeared to prey upon him.—At intervals, indeed, he gazed wildly around him, and

seemed to sigh heavily; but as the sun disperses clouds, so after a short absence of mind, he would seem to collect his scattered spirits, and banishing his gloom converse with Hamet on indifferent subjects. He addressed Cicely with great kindness, asked of her situation, her family, &c. she replied as she had before done to Hamet, except further, that her husband was absent, and that she had an only daughter whom she should be happy to fix in the world.

"Sometime hereafter you must introduce her to us, my good dame," answered he, "this morning we are engaged at the monastery, with father la Roche;—he is an old acquaintance whom, till yesterday, I have not seen for twenty years.—I rejoice to find him bear his age so well."

"He doth indeed," answered Cicely, "although he is dreadfully lame;—had it not

not been for that misfortune, he would have accompanied the late pilgrimage into Palestine."

Jaques answered that he had so informed him;—and having made a hasty breakfast, he departed with Hamet.

Being informed that father la Roche was in the chapel, they repaired thither, and found him in earnest conversation with a young female of so uncommon a beauty that both Jaques and the Saracen gazed on her with such visible wonder and admiration, that the maid was covered with blushes, and instantly prepared to depart.

"Farewel, daughter," said la Roche, "remember me to dame Cicely;—keep up your spirits, all will, I trust, end to your wishes."

"Heaven keep you, father!" said she, without raising her eyes; and making a reverence, she left the chapel.

Jaques and Hamet passed the whole day with the fathers, as they did several succeeding ones, and the second week after their arrival, the Saracen, all his doubts being previously satisfied, at the foot of the altar abjured his errors and false prophet, and became a Christian.

The Baron de Pointz was now daily expected,—the castle was prepared to receive its lord; the seats of the great hall were covered with velvet, and wax tapers were placed in the golden sockets. Silver lamps were trimmed and served with odoriferous oils in the chambers, nor did Cicely neglect, as the baron had before chosen his mother's apartment, to remove the black hangings, and replace them by others of a light and cheerful hue.

Jaques appeared to expect the baron's arrival with impatience, and every morning did not fail to ride some miles in the hope of

of meeting him. He was at length successful; and mutual congratulations having passed, the baron expressed his satisfaction on the amended looks of both the veteran and Hamet, but more particularly at the change that had taken place in the faith of the latter.

The intelligence of their approach preceded their arrival at the castle, some of the vassals having hastened forward; and all were assembled to meet and welcome the baron.—"Long live our generous master!" exclaimed they, "the noble lord of Latimer, the son of our blessed lady the baroness!—Long life and happiness attend him!"

The baron having made the voyage to Palestine, also appeared to have increased the esteem of his dependants, as it at once gave them a decided opinion of his courage and piety. He thanked all, prayed them

to make merry on his return, and commanded wine and meat to be brought forth, and a purse of gold to be distributed among them.

On reaching the castle, the baron was pleased to find la Roche ready to receive him; the old man welcomed him with tears, but they were, as he said, tears of joy.

Fitz-Hugh, who had latterly lost much of his levity, appeared on reaching the domain of Latimer, suddenly to have regained it. He shook la Roche heartily by the hand; and leaving the hall, without a guide, explored the different apartments of the castle. The bell to announce the hour of dinner recalled him to the hall, where he found the baron conversing with Cicely, whom he had not yet seen; but judging by the respectability of her appearance

pearance that she was the wife of le Val, he immediately introduced himself.—" My name is Fitz-Hugh, my good dame," said he, " a poor knight, and as some say, better fed than taught; yet as I am, I shall be happy to be better known to you."

The dame courtesied, and said she should be proud to be known to any of the baron's friends.

" I pray ye remember me to your husband," continued he; " from the information of the baron, I have been taught to respect him,—I hope he is well."

" I thank ye, kind Sir, he was well a fortnight since, when he departed to receive the revenues of the estate of de Mowbray for the use of the Franciscan friars;—I trust he will speedily return."

" I hope so," replied the baron; " I saw him not when I was here before."

" I

"I have his keys, my Lord; and when it shall so please ye to inspect his accounts, they are ready."

"There is no haste, I have no doubt of his probity, dame Cicely; my mother's attachment to your family sufficiently proves it."

"I thank you my Lord; and trust we shall not forfeit your good opinion."

"I think," said Fitz-Hugh, pausing, and apparently recollecting, "you have a son?"

"No, good Sir, one only daughter."

"Aye, true, now I recollect the baron told me so.—I trust she is well?"

"Her health is good, I thank Heaven."

"I rejoice to hear it.—Is she wedded?"

"No, Sir."

"I pray ye then give my love to her."

"Sir!"

"Heed

"Heed him not, I conjure you, my good dame," said the baron. "In faith, I believe he hath been bottling up his spirits for the last six weeks, and hath now drawn out the cork to bewilder our heads with their effervescence."

The vassals entering with dinner, Cicely crossed the hall to retire, when Fitz-Hugh suddenly followed her, and by his manner appeared to be apologizing for his levity; but the hall was extensive, and he spoke in so low a voice, that his words did not reach the baron's ear.

Surrounded by his friends, the baron's spirits appeared exhilarated, and the day passed with mutual satisfaction to all parties.

When the baron retired to rest, he was surprised at the difference which Cicely had made in the chamber, and in his heart acknowledged her kindness; but it had lost

lost the attraction which had before rendered it interesting to him, for it no longer recalled to his memory the sorrow and affection of Christabelle de Mowbray. The amber cabinet alone appeared the same; he viewed it with respect, and leaning over it with a sentiment of tenderness, said, mentally,—"Would to Heaven, thy fair owner had lived to judge more favourably of me. If I know my own heart, my mother's wishes would not have been difficult to fulfil, for without estimating the rare beauty the maid was said to possess, where could fortune have directed me to a woman of such understanding and gentleness?"

De Pointz retired to rest; and, different from the first night, or indeed any he had before passed in the castle, he slept sound and pleasantly. Various fanciful dreams played on his imagination; and among them, one which on his awaking he perfectly

fectly recalled to his memory. — He thought himself in the great hall of the castle, where all was prepared for his espousals. His father and mother, in perfect friendship, were seated in the highest place; and though no trace of the person of the latter remained on his recollection, he saw her, as he conceived, with features resembling his own, but softened by feminine beauty and delicacy. Many nobles with whom he was not acquainted, graced the company; and among them were placed Jaques, Fitz-Hugh, and Hamet. He in vain looked round for Bertram, but he saw him not; neither was the bride present. At length his parents left the hall, but speedily returned, leading between them a tall and graceful female, cloathed in a white and flowing garment, but whose face was so entirely concealed by a thick veil, that not a single feature was discernible.

discernible. He thought he entreated to see her face before he espoused her, but his mother peremptorily refused, saying,—" I demand this proof of obedience, for so many years of forfeit duty; receive her without murmur, not as my gift, but as the gift of Heaven,—and may the Virgin bless your union." Thus pressed, de Pointz thought he presented his hand;—when Gregory, who found he slept far beyond his accustomed hour, at that moment drew back the curtain and dissolved the charm.

Rising, he repaired to the hall, where he found his friends assembled; and as Gregory waited, laughing, he said,—" In faith, Gregory, I know not whether I owe thee good or ill will, but for thy awaking me this morning, I had been before this time wedded."

" I

"I would then," replied Fitz-Hugh, "that he had slept for a month, rather than have disturbed so praise worthy a resolve.—I have for some time past been thinking that thou would'st do well to marry."

"Indeed!" returned the baron, "since thou art so well inclined to the state, I pray thee set the example."

"I mean it, and speedily too. I like your English beauties, and when I can meet with one who will accept a poor dog with no gold, but a plentiful stock of love, I will forswear my mad pranks and wed her; laugh at solitary bachelors, learn to make posset, dandle my brats, and as I admire their chubby unmeaning faces, discover in their features all their mother's charms, and their father's understanding."

"In faith," said de Pointz, "I think thou hast considered the subject; when thy

thy choice is made, I pray thee introduce me to her."

The entrance of la Roche broke on the conversation. The baron and Fitz-Hugh both observed that a strict friendship appeared to subsist between him and Jaques; and as the spirits of the latter seemed less oppressed than usual, expected that he would now enter into some conversation respecting his family.—They were, however, disappointed, no such confidence took place; and both were too delicate to make the most distant allusion to the subject.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XLII.

THE ensuing afternoon, Fitz-Hugh said to de Pointz, as they were sitting with Jaques and Hamet,—"I think when you described this castle and its inhabitants to me, though you were very profuse in your commendations of dame Cicely, you never mentioned her daughter."

"Because," returned the baron, "I had never seen her; she was then absent with her

her father.—Yet, now thou recallest her to my memory, as she was educated with the Lady Christabelle, and has also a claim on me from the long services of her family, I hold myself bound to give her such a marriage portion as may enable her to fix in life above her present condition."

"You will do well," answered he drily, "I know no greater provocative to marriage than plenty of gold."

"Plenty of gold," repeated the baron, "is the girl then so plain, that thou thinkest there will be a difficulty in finding her a husband?"

"Not so absolutely ugly as to make her despair," answered Fitz-Hugh; "then I should judge she may be somewhat accomplished, from the example of the Lady Cbristabelle."

"True,"

"True," replied the baron hastily, "thou hast awakened my curiosity.—If she possesses a tenth of Christabelle's talents, and a fourth of the gentleness and affection that her chronicles testify, any man may be blessed in such a wife, though beauty were not among the number of her endowments."

"Speak you of Cicely's daughter, Adnee?" said Jaques.

"Aye," returned the Baron, "ye have been here some time, have ye conversed with her?"

Jaques replied in the negative, adding, —"Hamet and myself saw her with la Roche at the chapel; but she appeared timid and disconcerted.—She is one of his particular favourites."

"That circumstance promises well," returned the baron, "is she so plain as Fitz-Hugh reports?"

"I

"I think not," answered Jaques.

"I did not say she was plain,—you simply chose to misconceive my words, and then lay the blame on me."

"Thou hast a keen eye to beauty, Fitz-Hugh," replied the baron, "and on second thoughts, had she not possessed some attractions, thou would'st never have considered her worth notice. But I pray thee remember that she is ———"

"Under your protection, and that I am your guest," interrupted Fitz-Hugh; "I know all such wisdom by heart, so you may spare yourself the trouble of repeating it.—Besides, the girl is not to my taste, though I think she might suit you."

"Suit me," replied the baron, "but that I know thou art in jest, I should be displeased.—The daughter of an old and faithful servant, the companion of Christabelle de Mowbray, the pupil perhaps, in many

many instances, of my mother;—no, were all the charms of womankind united in her person, one of those reflections only would, with me, be sufficient to secure her with a charm too powerful for passion to break through."

"De Pointz I honour you from my soul," replied Jaques warmly,—but apparently checking what should follow, he remained silent.

"I intend shortly to enter on a course of philosophical lectures," said Fitz-Hugh, "to study platonics and the subjugation of the passions."

"But this morning," answered Hamet, "you intended to marry."

"Assuredly, and will not philosophy be the preliminary step. All men have need of wisdom, but a married man without philosophy, is like a citadel without guards, where every trifle causes alarm, and gives the

the enemy the advantage.—A ship at sea without a rudder.—No, no, Fitz-Hugh, the married man, will be none of these."

In the evening, Jaques and Hamet attended vespers at the monastery, while the baron, with Fitz-Hugh, walked through the garden, near the castle, conversing on future arrangements and improvements which he meant to make on that domain, with which he declared himself particularly pleased.—Turning an avenue, Fitz-Hugh hastily exclaimed,—"By my life, there is Cicely and her daughter, I pray ye speak to them; I wish ye much to see her."

They were at too great a distance for the features of the maid to be distinguished; but her graceful person, shaded in white drapery, gliding among the trees, gave her, in the opinion of the baron, the form of a sylph.

sylph. She appeared in such earnest conversation with Cicely, that she did not discover de Pointz and his friend.

"Come, come, my Lord," said the latter, "should she see us she will fly.—Jaques said truly, she is timid and diffident, but when spoken to, you will find her shrewd and sensible."

"By my honour, you appear well acquainted with her; you have not lost time. Surely she hath not given rise to your late matrimonial fancies."

"In faith no;—little as I know of her, I think I could love her as a friend, but as a wife she would not, as I before said, suit me."

"Yet you declared she might suit me,—what meant you by that?"

"Meant," repeated Fitz-Hugh, "nothing;—if you always expect me to find a

meaning for what I say, you must doom me to silence eleven hours out of twelve."

At that moment Adnee raised her eyes. The baron, with Fitz-Hugh, had crossed into the same path, and were but a short distance from her; the maid held a flower which fell from her hand on sight of the baron, and, as Fitz-Hugh had observed, appeared more ready to fly than await his approach. Cicely took her arm, and by her gestures seemed to rebuke her weakness and want of attention to their lord; then drawing aside, both respectfully stood still to pay their duty as the baron passed.

De Pointz was no libertine, yet was he not insensible to the power of beauty, and never before had he witnessed it in such perfection.—His confusion equalled the maid's, he started, his eyes were rivetted on her face, and his feet fixed to the ground.

—Adnee

—Adnee was tall and formed with exquisite symmetry, yet so light, that as the wind wafted her white garment, she looked like a spirit who might have been borne upon the breeze. Her features were those of perfect beauty, covered by a complexion so fair and crystalline, that the emotions of her mind varied alternately in pale or brighter shades upon her cheeks.—Her eyes were dark and piercing, but on the approach of the baron, shaded by their long and silken lashes, were fixed upon the earth.—Her mouth at once displayed the glowing crimson of the ruby and the whiteness of the pearl, while around her lips the sweet dimpled smile of innocent cheerfulness redoubled their loveliness. — Her head was uncovered, save by a fillet which confined her bright chesnut coloured tresses from falling over her forehead;

while behind uncontrolled it fell in ringlets over her neck and fine turned shoulders, to the bottom of her waist.

"Fitz-Hugh," said the baron, "is this real!—Sure 'tis illusion!—I pray thee speak to her, for I cannot?"

Had the baron looked at Fitz-Hugh, he would have seen a confusion equal to his own, but he was blind to every object except Adnee.

"Fair maid," said the knight, "the baron requests me to say you have not welcomed him to the castle.—With your leave, dame Cicely, I will be the 'squire on this occasion."

Cicely bowed, and Fitz-Hugh taking the hand of Adnee, led her towards the baron; her face dyed with blushes, her limbs trembling, and her eyes cast on the herbage beneath her feet.

The

The word—"*Welcome*," faintly articulated, alone reached the baron's ear; it was, however, sufficient to increase his confusion, but which was diverted by the maid's attempting to bend her knee before him — his arm prevented her, though its trepidation was equal to her own.

"I feel myself indeed welcome, sweet maid, if you tell me so.—Your respectable mother does wisely to estrange so fair a gem from the world; — but Adnee, in Philip de Pointz, must not see a tyrant, but a friend and protector."

Adnee, hesitatingly and with confusion, endeavoured to return her thanks; but her voice even yet more than her person appeared to strike him with wonder.—"Dame Cicely," said he, "have ye not more children?"

"I have no child but my daughter Adnee, my Lord," answered she.

"Had ye never a son?"

"Never, my Lord."

"'Tis strange.—Didst thou ever, Fitz-Hugh, see so astonishing a resemblance?"

"Between whom, my Lord?" replied the knight.

"Is it possible thou canst ask that question?"

"Pardon me, I am absent," answered Fitz-Hugh, "though I think they resemble each other somewhat in feature; but the likeness is not striking, and the eyes totally different."

"By my life they are the same," returned the baron, impatiently.

"Fitz-Hugh laughed,—"I know not what logic you can use to persuade me that black and blue are the same."

"Black

"Black and blue!—Why thou dreamest, they are both black."

"True, my Lord, the maid's are both black, as assuredly as those of the dame are both blue."

"Pish!" answered the baron, impatiently, "it is not possible thou should'st so grossly misconceive me."

"From the impatience of your manner I should judge I do, but who surely is the maid so likely to resemble as her mother?"

The baron made no answer.—While he was conversing with Fitz-Hugh, Adnee had respectfully drawn aside with Cicely.—"Fair Adnee," resumed he, "if I mistake not, you were the chosen friend of the peerless Christabelle de Mowbray;—you shared her education and her pursuits."

Adnee bowed.

"That you were not particularized in my mother's testament, was doubtless an unintentional omission; it shall be my care to rectify it.—I am convinced she must have loved you."

Adnee made no reply, but her eyes were suffused with tears.

"My Lord," said Cicely, "the baroness was so dear to her vassals, that her name even yet recals all our sorrow.—I pray you for the present excuse us, Adnee will, I trust, be more collected when she again has the honour to stand before you."

"At your pleasure," replied de Pointz. "I grieve, nay, I ought to blush, to find the name of my mother more sacred to your daughter than to myself."

"Not so, my Lord," returned Cicely, "you never knew the baroness;—yet she lives

lives again in you, and in you we again honour, respect, and love her."

The baron in his turn was moved.—Adnee had turned towards the castle, and Cicely respectfully paying her duty to her lord, followed her daughter, while Fitz-Hugh, assuming the appearance of a levity which he did not feel, said,—"Well, my Lord, what think you of your fair vassal?"

"I have not as yet had time either to judge or think of her," replied he.—"Her beauty is doubtless dazzling, but what her understanding may be I know not, I have scarcely heard the sound of her voice; but it struck on my heart as a tone I wished to forget."

While the baron was speaking, Fitz-Hugh appeared to ruminate,—"You said," replied he, "she resembled some one, and was offended that my judgment

was not sufficiently acute to discover the object.—I have since considered her, and think she bears some resemblance to our fictitious Alan, except that the latter was much handsomer had she been cloathed in female habiliments."

"Thou art mad! — infatuated! — or otherwise art playing upon me."

"I will say no more then;—but every man has a fancy, and that little varlet was exactly to mine."

Jaques with Hamet at that moment appeared, walking towards them.—The baron joined them in silence, but Fitz-Hugh, more communicative, related what had passed, and that the baron was dissatisfied that he could not discover a resemblance she bore to some one of his friends whom he forbore to name."

"Because

"Because the likeness is so obvious," answered the baron, "that it is impossible to mistake it.—You have both seen Cicely's daughter, I think; say, whom doth she resemble?"

Fitz-Hugh appeared equally anxious to hear the opinion of Jaques and Hamet, and fixing his eyes on them with curious enquiry, he awaited their reply.

"I once knew one whom she did in truth resemble," said Jaques, with a sigh, "one who possessed at once the beauty, innocence, and purity of an angel;—but she hath been long numbered with the dead, nor could you ever have known her."

"She is the fairest maid I ever saw," said Hamet, "not excepting my own Selima,—though the sentiments her beauty inspire are widely different."

A smile of satisfaction passed over Fitz-Hugh's cheek, though it favoured of incredulity.—"Well now, I pray you, my Lord," said he, "tell us whom she doth resemble."

"I cannot disbelieve you all," replied the baron, "though my judgment and reason are both against you. However, let us at present banish the subject; a nearer acquaintance with the maid may make me retract my opinion, or you perhaps adopt it."

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XLIII.

NOT a single hour during the rest of the evening was Adnee absent from the baron's thoughts; and even when he retired for the night, her image still floated on his imagination. He wished to converse with her, in order to ascertain whether her understanding equalled her beauty;—to talk with her only, as he thought, of his mother, and of Christabelle de

de Mowbray, and to fulfil what he had promised respecting the deficiencies of her fortune. The next day was his birth day, the first that he had passed at the castle of Latimer since his infancy, and was to be celebrated by every demonstration of joy. He awoke with the dawn, and as he lay ruminating, fancied that in the gallery adjoining his chamber he heard music; he listened, it was the harp, and that so sweetly touched, that its sound vibrated on his heart, accompanied by a voice whose power alternately swelled to the highest notes of harmony, or lowered by degrees into softer cadences, which at once shewed the sweetness of voice and the skill of the singer. As he attended, he found it a congratulatory hymn on his natal day; and unable to bear the suspense of uncertainty, he rushed from his bed, and hastily put on his garments, but ere

ere he could reach the spot, the hymn had concluded, and the singer left the gallery.

His heart whispered it was Adnee; and returning to his chamber, he threw himself into a chair, and was for some time lost in contemplation.—"Gracious Heaven!" at length exclaimed he, "my senses are in a chaos of confusion; never but once before did so melodious a voice reach my ear, I could almost think all I hear or see enchantment. Oh! my mother, why was I not permitted to visit this castle while you blessed it by your presence? or rather, now that you are no more, why did I visit it at all?"

He descended to the hall, his friends were not yet assembled, but the breakfast was spread, and the hall embellished with shrubs and flowers. In the middle was placed a huge branch of oak, and underneath

neath it various plants and blossoms. A scroll of parchment, emblazoned with the armorial bearings of the houses of Falconberg, de Pointz, and Latimer, streamed from the centre, and on which was traced, in letters of gold, the following words:

"*As the strong oak under its spreading*
"*branches shelters the bending sapling,*
"*and the wild flowers of the field from*
"*the desolating storm, so will* PHILIP DE
"POINTZ *protect his vassals and de-*
"*pendants from the power of oppression.*
"*—Like his mother, he will spread peace*
"*and plenty;—happiness shall return to*
"*the domain of Latimer, and the sound*
"*of gladness again re-echo through its*
"*vaulted roof.*"

The baron read the scroll with astonishment:—"Prophetic be the words," exclaimed he; "be the writer whom he may, alone, unseen, except by Heaven, I swear to

to endeavour to fulfil them,—and may the saints hear and ratify my oath!"

The baron called for Gregory, and asked who had decorated the hall; he replied, he judged it to be dame Cicely, and some of the ancient inmates of the castle, for he had found it in its present state when he entered it on his first rising. The baron ordered the dame to be requested to attend him; and on her appearance, approaching her he saluted her cheek.—"My good dame," said he, "receive my thanks, for the flattering attention you have shewn to my birth day; and add, I pray you, to the obligation, by informing me to whom I am indebted for that scroll, and also for some sweet music I heard this morning?"

Cicely blushed deeply.—"My gracious Lord," answered she, "health, happiness, and length of days, attend you!—Though I was enjoined to silence, I can not refuse

to

to satisfy you.—The maid whom yesterday you honoured with your notice, resolved to be the first to congratulate you on this happy day; she also traced the letters on the scroll, for which if you are displeased she will be sincerely grieved."

"Displeased!" repeated the baron.—"If I have your permission, dame Cicely, I pray you conduct me to pay my thanks."

"It were more fitting, my Lord, that Adnee attended you here, than you condescend to wait on her."

"Not so, my good dame, I pray you lead the way, 'tis a compliment I owe your daughter. You hesitate," added he, explaining an expression of confusion that crossed her features to a doubt of his intentions; "your Adnee is indeed beautiful, but to de Pointz she is sacred."

Cicely courtesied, and led the way to a suite of apartments retired from the more splendid

splendid parts of the castle. Entering one, she said hastily,—" My dearest Adnee, be prepared, the baron is here; he comes to thank you for your attentions of this morning."

The baron followed.—Adnee was seated by a table, on which was a curious piece of embroidery on which she had been employed, and by her side lay her harp.—Starting at the intelligence of Cicely, she rose hastily; and bowing to the baron, he was astonished to see her eyes bathed in tears.

" Fair Adnee," said he, " forgive this intrusion, I could not suppress the inclination I had to pay my thanks; enchantingly as you touch the harp, your voice is yet sweeter music. For the scroll in the hall, I can only say, I will endeavour to fulfil what you have promised for me; and surely should I forget my duty, the image of

of Adnee will recal the sacred trust to my remembrance. Yet amidst the gladness I wish to see around me, why, I pray you, are there tears?—In the presence of the good dame, I conjure you tell me, that if it be possible we may disperse them."

Adnee hesitated a moment, then replied,—" My Lord, I would rather relate the true cause, than leave you to form erroneous conjectures; my tears are not those of sorrow, they are the overflowings of a thankful heart.—I joy, I glory to see the rightful heir of Latimer enjoy his own; but my tears involuntarily forced their way, when I reflected how much more complete that satisfaction would have been had the baroness been spared to share it."

As Adnee spoke, the baron's eyes were fixed on her with the most scrutinizing attention; he sighed deeply, and replied,—

" For

"For myself I must again thank you, sweet maid, and truly confess, I would sooner resign half my possessions, than this domain, to which I have insensibly become attached; yet, so prosper me Heaven, if I do not bitterly deplore the means which constituted me its lord, and would now willingly give its equivalent in value, to see your friend, the gentle Christabelle, the present hostess of the castle. You knew her well, Adnee,—you must also make me more acquainted with her, for hitherto all I have heard hath encreased my respect for her."

Adnee made no reply.

"My Lord," answered Cicely, "this is a subject on which, I pray you, for some time to spare us,—hereafter we are at your commands."

"Pardon me," replied he, "I feel the impropriety of my request; but though I honour

honour the memory of my mother, and also that of the Lady Christabelle, yet I am convinced I do not feel their loss so acutely as those who were more immediately known to them.—But enough on that subject, the vassals this day are my guests, and the evening will be terminated by the merry song and jocund dance;—will you not, fair Adnee, accompany your mother?"

"My Lord, I pray you take it not amiss if I decline your kindness. Here in my chamber will I most fervently wish you health and prosperity; but neither my spirits nor inclination suit the bustle of a numerous and mixed company. I shall hear their distant shouts, and my heart will join in their satisfaction with an ardour, which mingling in the confusion of the moment would not fail to destroy."

"Although I had wished for so fair a partner," replied the baron, "the refusal is

is so truly worthy of your delicacy and gentleness, that I must per force acquiesce. For the present farewel!"

"Farewel, my Lord! every blessing attend you,—a youth of happiness, and an old age of honour.—May the first resemble an abundant summer, and the second a glorious autumn, when the rich produce collected, is ready to be rendered up, in the firm reliance of being repaid by everlasting peace."

The enthusiasm with which Adnee expressed her wishes, the sound of her voice, and the fervour with which her fine eyes were raised to Heaven, for a moment astonished the baron. Struggling against his emotion, he endeavoured to reply; and scarcely conscious of the action, raised her hand to his lips.

The maid's face was dyed with blushes, the baron's bore the same complexion.—

"Remember

"Remember 'tis my birth day, Adnee," said he, "and I shall be forgiven; I will yearly, while that fair hand is your own, claim the same tribute, and deem myself richly paid. Dame Cicely, I shall see you speedily."

So saying he left them, and returned to the hall, where he found all his friends assembled. The baron thought that curiosity respecting his absence, for he was usually first in the hall, sat on the features of the party; but if so, no one gave it vent, except Fitz-Hugh, who when Jaques and Hamet had congratulated de Pointz on the day, said, in his turn,—"Heaven speed your wishes, my Lord, and send you a joyful father by this time twelvemonth."

A burning crimson passed the baron's cheek.—"I thank you," replied he, "but the time is rather short, I am not yet provided with a bride."

"'Tis

"'Tis a defect easily removed," returned Fitz-Hugh. "Matches, some say, are made in Heaven; if so, my Lord, you have but to pray that your state of probation may be shortened."

The breakfast was scarcely concluded, when father la Roche joined them. They accompanied him back to hear high mass, after which Jaques and Hamet remained for some time with him; while the baron and Fitz-Hugh returned to the castle, in order to receive the guests.

As they walked forward, Fitz-Hugh conversed on indifferent subjects, but the baron it was obvious was absent, and lost in contemplating some other object. At length the knight said, carelessly,—"Have you seen our fair Adnee this morning?—She will be the goddess of our feast, for neither your domain, nor the whole county,

I would wager, can produce her equal.—What think you of her, my Lord?"

"Think!" answered the baron, warmly, "I think she is an angel!"

"It were as well she should be a woman some years longer," replied Fitz-Hugh.

"Now, in faith," returned the baron, "notwithstanding thy levity thou lovest the maid."

"Suppose it,—where is the wrong?—Is she not formed to be beloved?"

"Granted,—but remember she is too humbly born to be thy wife, and too naturally great to be thy mistress. When she selects a youth whom she judges can make her happy, I take her portion on myself; in that, at least, she shall not miss either my mother or Christabelle de Mowbray."

"In faith, jesting apart," said Fitz-Hugh, "notwithstanding my levity, as you

you term it, he must be a more impudent fellow than myself, who would dare assail her ears with ought but the most respectful purity. I confess I regard her with admiration, but it is mingled with a sentiment too high to admit of loose thoughts."

"Thou speakest my opinion; — her beauty, from the little I can judge, is but as a rich case to contain the more estimable jewels of innocence, gentleness, and modesty."

As the baron spoke they discovered a troop of horsemen, richly accoutred, approaching the castle gates; and surmising they were come to share the festivity of the day, they hastened forward, when they found the Lords Villeneuf and la Tours, with their vassals and domestics. Having bidden them cordially welcome, the baron led them to the hall, where they were soon after joined by Jaques and Hamet, and

many nobles who came to do honour to the baron on the occasion.

The day passed in festivity; the outward halls were filled with the vassals, who shared not only in the feasting and mirth of the day, but also each received a small piece of gold as a remembrancer. The health of the baron was pledged in repeated goblets of wine, and singing and dancing beguiled the hours till the sun of the ensuing morn had risen; when those who dwelt within some few miles departed, while others tarried till the next day—Villeneuf and la Tours accepting the baron's invitation to pass a week or two with him before they returned to Westmorland, where their domains were situated.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XLIV.

THOUGH de Pointz used his utmost endeavours to amuse and welcome his guests, to himself the time appeared tedious; the voices of the singers seemed dissonant after the melody of Adnee, and their music was harsh and grating to his ear, when compared to the sound of her harp. He wished again to converse with her, but fearful of alarming either her or Cicely, he constrained his inclinations, and on the

second night from the festival, retired with the same self denial.

Dismissing Gregory, he did not at once retire to rest, the occurrences of the last two days employed all his thoughts.—He examined his own heart, the retrospect did not please him; he found Adnee fixed there beyond his power of obliterating her idea, and formed a hundred resolutions which were as hastily relinquished, until at length wearied with unprofitable thinking, he retired to his bed.—But even there, the form of Adnee haunted his dreams, and, ever lovely, bewildered his fancy as much sleeping, as she had before done waking.—He arose with the dawn,—all throughout the castle was silent, and crossing the park of his own domain, he proceeded towards the chapel of the convent. The bell rang for early matins, and on his entrance he was struck with amazement on seeing prostrate

prostrate before the altar, dame Cicely and her daughter. The reverence due to the place prevented his addressing them, and devoutly kneeling, he attended during the prayers, which being concluded, he observed la Roche approaching them, but who seeing the baron said,—"My Lord, this visit though unexpected is welcome, it is never too early to fulfil the great and important duties of our faith;—this fair maid, and dame Cicely, frequently attend matins, but I did not expect to find you so early a riser."

"Surely, father," replied de Pointz, "if it be not too early for a woman of the middle age, and a young and delicate maid, it cannot injure one so robust as myself."

As he spoke, Cicely and Adnee respectfully passed him, in order to leave the chapel, when de Pointz almost involuntarily

said,—"Tarry, I pray ye, I mean immediately to return, and shall be favoured by your company on the way."

Cicely bowed, and la Roche bidding them farewel they returned homeward.—"Father la Roche," said the baron, "remarked that you frequently attended matins, why do you not rather prefer the later prayers?"

"The reason is, my Lord," answered Cicely, "that at the early prayers we rarely meet anyone but the priests and sisters of the convent; whereas, as the day is more advanced, the chapel is usually full."

"It is most true.—Your devotion is praiseworthy, but I pray you take heed of your health. The education of your daughter does you honour, her unassuming modesty might grace a diadem.—She was far more wise than me,—I wished her to grace the hall on my birth day, but before night

night was sensible of the propriety of her refusal, for a scene of riot and intoxication was not proper for her to witness."

As they proceeded they discoursed on various subjects, on which Adnee, when referred to, though with diffidence and modesty, so clearly shewed her understanding, that the baron was more charmed with her than ever. He walked with them to the castle gates, and then found all his resolution necessary to tear himself away; and proceeding to the hall, sat for some time before any of his guests had left their chambers.

"I am upon the brink of a precipice," said he mentally, "and flight is my only hope, — yet what to forget? — Youth, beauty, understanding, innocence, and worth. — What a companion! — what a wife!—what a mother!—Would I were her equal or that she were mine!—My

mother's pupil and Christabelle de Mowbray's friend;—so far, indeed, it were well, —but then a vassal's daughter. — Oh, pride, fastidious phantom! why are mankind thy slaves—why barter happiness for vain-glorious empty pomp?"

Lost in similar reflections, the baron remained till joined by his guests, who, after breakfast, accompanied him to the field of sports, where they passed the hours till dinner, in running at the ring, tilting, and similar exercises.

After dinner, the goblet went briskly round for some time, when they again returned to their sports;—all except Villeneuf, who pleaded weariness and remained at the castle.

A libertine by principle, and unrestrained by even the laws of hospitality, his motive was far different from what he asserted.—As Adnee with Cicely had passed the lower galleries

galleries in the morning, he by chance had seen her, and though no opportunity had then offered to speak to her, he resolved to seek an occasion. Enquiring of Jaques, who was also passing, he had learned the situation of Cicely in the castle, and considering Adnee only as a domestic's daughter, he had no doubt of procuring a favourable reception of what he meant to offer.—The dignity, mingled with modesty, of her manner did not escape his observation, for on his gazing rudely on her, she had turned aside with evident marks of contempt. But their situations contrasted all doubt vanished, for he supposed it impossible that a maiden so far beneath him in rank, would dare to refuse what he should request. For an opportunity of conversing with her, he formed the excuse for not accompanying the baron, and was no sooner alone, than passing several apartments,

ments, he enquired his way to those of Cicely. The dame was employed in a distant part of the castle; and during her absence Adnee, who expected no intruders, having seen the baron and the whole of his company, as she thought, retire to the tilting ground, took her lute and placed herself in one of the windows of a lower gallery which overlooked the adjacent country.

Nothing could have happened more opportunely for Villeneuf, who saw her alone as he entered, her back towards him and, unconscious of his intrusion, playing on her lute.

For a moment he gazed and listened in silence, then rushing forward he exclaimed, —"Such accomplishments were not necessary to render thee the most fascinating of thy sex; and I regard this as one of the most fortunate moments of my life when I have

have found the means to tell thee that I love thee to distraction."

Adnee arose,—in her haste she dropped her lute, and her eyes sparkling with disdain, in silent contempt she endeavoured to pass him and leave the gallery.

"Not so, by my life!" exclaimed he, preventing her, "you must not leave me, sweet maid;—you shall no longer be a vassal of the Baron de Pointz, but the sharer of my fortune, and the mistress of my heart."

Adnee's face was crimson with anger, again she attempted to pass;—"Insolent man," said she, "learn that the meanest vassal in the baron's house, is, in my eyes, superior to thee."

"Indeed! — so proud too! — Knowest thou my rank?"

"Yes, and despise it," replied the maid, disdainfully.—"I have no time to waste on

on so contemptuous a subject.—Away, and let me pass!"

Villeneuf, at once stung by her contempt and influenced by her beauty, seized her arm,—"By my honour," said he, "thy anger improves thy beauty;—I pray thee be kind,—in faith I will be generous."

Adnee snatched her arm from him,—"Honour and generosity from thee!" replied she, "I pray thee use words whose purport are more within thy comprehension, those qualities are above thy knowledge.—Nay, come not nearer, or thou wilt force me to have recourse to my voice, which will speedily bring me succour; in which case, be assured, the baron will resent the insult offered to one under his roof."

"Is it then so," returned he, "thou threatenest me with the baron,—that paragon of nobles, the virtuous immaculate de Pointz?—In faith he hath a good taste!"

"It

"It failed him then when he suffered thee to become his companion," said she. "Again I bid thee begone, or suffer me to pass, least I call the domestics to chastise thee."

The haughtiness of the maid amazed him, but warm with wine, mad with passion, and provoked by her disdain, he once more drew towards her and clasped her waist.

"Unhand me, ruffian!—Nay then, who is near?"—cried she aloud,—"come forth, I can bear no more.—Who waits?—Again I say, come forth!"

Adnee had not dared to cross to the extremity of the gallery, as it led to the more estranged apartments of the castle, least Villeneuf should follow her;—but, on her crying aloud, to her great surprise, and the vexation of Villeneuf, at that moment Jaques rushed forward,—"Who called," said he, "was it thee, damsel?"

Villeneuf,

Villeneuf, alarmed by the interruption, made no reply.—Adnee was also silent.—"What is the matter?" continued Jaques, "behold I am ready.—Adnee, thou art alarmed, give me thy hand;—retire to the apartments of Cicely, there thou art safe."

Pale and trembling she gave him her hand, and he led her to the end of the gallery without interruption.—"Maid," said he, in a low voice, as he quitted her, "why dost thou, by frivolous follies, trifle away thy happiness, and subject thyself to insult?"

Adnee made no reply, but fearful of the confusion that might ensue, she hastened to seek some of the vassals, while Jaques returning to Villeneuf, said,—"What was the cause of this alarm?—Who affrighted the maid?—Surely it could not be thee!"

There was a marked contempt in the manner of Jaques, that even cowardice could not have overlooked; and Villeneuf, stung

stung at once with the conduct of Adnee and the words of Jaques, replied,—" Suppose it so, what then?"

" What then!" repeated the veteran, " why then thou must be indeed a fool, to suppose a maid like her could descend to look at such a thing as thee."

" By my life, I have misreckoned," replied Villeneuf, " thou art the favoured lover. Pardon me, I did not think thou hadst a colt tooth left."

" Marry, have I, but thou shalt have none!—Take that," said he, striking him on the face; " and if thou hast the soul of a man resent it."

Villeneuf drew his sword, and advanced towards Jaques, who stood on his defence; adding,—" Beware, young man, or in my hand thou wilt be as nothing."

Villeneuf made a stroke at Jaques, who parried the blow; and with an active and skilful

skilful arm struck his antagonist's weapon to the ground.

At that moment the baron, with Fitz-Hugh, Hamet, la Tours, and some attendants, entered.—"What demon is let loose among ye, my honoured guests?" exclaimed de Pointz, rushing between them. "I pray ye forbear. Villeneuf, why is this?—Jaques, my friend and father, for my sake restrain thy anger, and declare what is amiss."

Jaques looked disdain and defiance at Villeneuf, without reply.

Villeneuf was a moment silent, then said,—"In faith, nothing, but that I met one of your pretty maidens, and presumed to tell her what I thought of her beauty, and to claim her welcome to the castle."

"Where did you meet her?—What was her name?" enquired the baron, in a hurried accent.

"It

"It was the maid you call Adnee," said Jaques, coldly.

"Then a curse on me and mine," exclaimed the baron, passionately, "if I will not pursue the villain to deadly hatred, who shall dare to offend her!"

"And I also!" added Hamet, grasping his sword.

"And I," said Fitz-Hugh, "will consider him as my most inveterate foe, and pursue him to death!"

"For me," said Jaques, "though worn with sorrow, I have yet a strong arm, and a vindictive spirit, and let those beware who dare offend me; for, by my soul, neither my affronts, nor Adnee's insults shall pass unpunished!"

"It appertains to me in this case to resent them," replied the baron, "nor shall they pass unnoticed. Villeneuf, you are safe under my roof; but if you have behaved

haved unbecoming my guest, look to it, we shall meet again."

"And what is all this for?" said la Tours, for the first time mingling in the dispute, "surely not for a vassal's daughter.—De Pointz, *your* motive is well understood.—She pleases your elder friends also; and even the volatile Fitz-Hugh is become a convert to her beauty, or her virtue."

"Insolent defamers!" cried de Pointz, "you shall not provoke me to forget where you are, however you may have violated the laws of hospitality. The maid you have dared to vilify, is as superior to you in mind, as she is in those virtues, which not possessing ye cannot comprehend."

"Aye," added Fitz-Hugh, "and as superior in purity to your mothers and sisters, as is a sainted virgin to a professed wanton. Pish, fools, if you would keep in

a

a safe skin, seek more fitting mates, for by insulting this maid, you will but rouse a hornet s nest to sting you to death; and mark me well, when by my father's soul I swear, that if within a short month, you do not make a full and ample expiation for your insolence, the tottering walls of your ancestors shall rattle about your ears."

"Indeed!" returned Villeneuf, "I understand thee now,—she is then thy intended bride; and thou hast influence sufficient with the baron to make him espouse the quarrel.—Well, we must be ready."

"You will do well," replied Fitz-Hugh, "in the mean time sharpen your wits, as well as your weapons, for you will have need of both."

"Come, la Tours," said Villeneuf, "we will away. Farewel, de Pointz!—In faith, thou mightest have made love to every girl on my domain without so much ado."

So

So saying, the young lords left the gallery, and calling for their horses, quitted the castle; while the baron, turning to Jaques, who appeared in deep reflection, said,—" My good friend, I thank you for your interference; it was fortunate you was near, for Villeneuf was much heated with wine. We immediately missed you from the field, and fearful you were ill, followed; and on our entrance were alarmed by the vassals, who were running towards the gallery."

" This morning," replied Jaques, " as I passed through to breakfast, I encountered Villeneuf; and conversing with him, we met Cicely with Adnee. He gazed on her with a rudeness which at once covered her face with blushes, and forced from her a look of contempt; and on her departure enquired particularly respecting her. I replied carelessly, for at the moment the circumstance

circumstance made little impression; for though I judged him of libertine principles, I did not suppose they could be powerful enough to make him insult one within your walls. On his declining to accompany us this afternoon, some suspicion crossed my thoughts, and I resolved to return home, if possible unnoticed; for I was unwilling to injure him in your opinion without cause. Passing by the end of the gallery, I heard Adnee's voice, and rushed in; and can only add, that if he is prone to commit such follies, he should at least learn to defend himself better."

"My good friend, I thank you; and the maid I am convinced will feel the obligation."

The conversation, during the remainder of the evening, was languid, each appeared to be engaged in reflections which they did not

not wish to communicate ; and at an early hour, Jaques and Hamet having retired, the baron and Fitz-Hugh, after some conversation followed their example

Gregory attended de Pointz to his chamber,—" You are not well, my Lord," said the faithful domestic, observing that his master had not his usual spirits, " I pray you let me wait for the first hours of the night, that in case you call I may be ready."

" Not so, good Gregory, be prepared by the dawn to-morrow, with five of my vassals whom thou mayest choose, for I shall ride.—I am well, but vexed at the confusion that Villeneuf hath made to day. Hast thou seen Cicely or her daughter?"

" No, my Lord, indeed I never yet saw the maid, once excepted, and then it was nearly dark. She usually keeps her mother's apartment, and apparently holds no communication with any person, except two

two or three of the ancient vassals, who speak of her with admiration and reverence."

"She appears to deserve their praise. Good night, hie thee to rest; and without disturbing my guests, let the men and horses be ready at four."

Gregory made his obeisance, and left the baron for the night.

CHAPTER XLV.

THOUGH de Pointz had recommended rest to his domestic, it was what he could not himself enjoy. Adnee employed all his thoughts; and though by nature noble and unsuspicious, jealousy found an entrance into his bosom, although he felt ashamed to acknowledge it even to himself. The respectable Jaques, a man of the middle age, bent with sorrow, and grown grey in suffering, was the first object who struck

struck his thoughts; not only from his having been so ready to defend her, but more particularly from the oath which he had afterwards sworn, that neither his affronts, nor Adnee's insults, should pass unpunished,—an asseveration which appeared to blend their interests in one.

A momentary reflection made him angry with himself for the suspicion; and Hamet, much younger, and but lately experiencing all the agonies of despair for a beloved object, appeared more deserving of jealousy. Yet, on consideration, he never mentioned Selima without anguish; and had vowed, since he became a Christian, never to know another love, but to devote himself to her memory. Lastly, and with redoubled force, Fitz-Hugh struck on his fancy. Young, handsome, gay, and susceptible, no friends to restrain his inclinations, and no rank sufficient to make

the union particularly unequal; his first acquaintance with her, his praises on her person and understanding, his anger with Villeneuf, and his threats, fixing the period at a month for an apology, or revenge, as if he thought by that time, he might have more right to claim it.

Though his suspicions respecting Jaques and Hamet had been banished by a momentary consideration, those respecting Fitz-Hugh were not to be surmounted.—He indeed recollected, that the knight had once said, that she would not suit him,—but that he regarded as a mere subterfuge, or the whim of the moment. It also struck him that Fitz-Hugh was frequently absent from him during the day; and perhaps employed those hours to gain the heart of Adnee. In these conjectures he passed the greater part of the night, and rose at day break; soon after which Gregory

Gregory attended him, and all being prepared, he left the castle with six attendants, without his departure being noticed by the guests.

La Tours had an uncle, who resided at about the distance of twelve miles from the domain of Latimer; and where the baron had no doubt the young lords would pass the night, as it was evening when they left the castle. He was not mistaken, for reaching the spot, and ringing at the gate of the aged Sir John la Tours, he was informed, that they were just assembled to breakfast. Causing himself to be announced, the venerable knight arose to receive and welcome so honourable a guest, (for he was unacquainted with the folly which Villeneuf had committed at Latimer) and de Pointz known only to him by report, he was flattered by the visit of a young nobleman, of whom the world

spoke so highly. The baron returned his compliment in a suitable manner, but declined breakfast; waiting with composed dignity, and conversing with his respectable host on various subjects, till it concluded.

The board removed, and the vassals withdrawn, the baron, addressing the knight, said,—"Sir John, I pray your pardon for the liberty I have taken; but the Lord Villeneuf hath offended me in a manner which my honour cannot brook.—I received him as a friend; and during the short stay he made at my castle, he hath insulted a maid, whom I am bound to protect, for she was bred at Latimer, and beloved by my mother. I will take no unfair advantage, but call upon him to defend with his arm, what his heart cannot justify. Before you, aged and respectable knight, I bid him defiance; and insist that he name his time, place, and weapons, when I will

be

be ready to meet him. I have thus unattended intruded on you, because I would not that my honoured guests should suspect, or enter into a quarrel which alone belongs to me to revenge."

Villeneuf and la Tours, who had not expected that the baron after the heat of the moment would think more of the business, were too confused to reply. The aged knight saw their disorder; and finding they made no answer, thus addressed the baron,—"Pleased as I at first felt to receive so noble a guest, the satisfaction is done away by the errand; and though la Tours be my nephew, and expected heir, and Villeneuf his dearest friend, I must allow, that if he hath done what you advance, it is as unbecoming in him as a noble knight, as in you it is praise-worthy to defend those under your roof;—and so prosper me Heaven, if in such a case, I

should not hold him a more brave and worthy man, to excuse, rather than defend so disgraceful an action."

A pause ensued.—Villeneuf, though not deficient in personal courage, did not wish to meet such an opponent as the baron, who he well knew possessed more skill than himself. — "I have no quarrel with the baron," at length said he, "his wine was alone to blame, and I am ready to apologise to him for the offence."

"You offer well, my young friend," answered the ancient knight, "but what says my neighbour, the baron?—If I judge him from report, noble and generous, he will accept your offer."

"It is enough," replied de Pointz, "so the Lord Villeneuf gives, under his hand, a line of apology to the maid."

Villeneuf by no means approved of such a condescension, but the baron would admit

mit of no palliative, and he was forced to comply.

Sir John la Tours then offering his hand to the baron, said,—"My Lord, if you will accept an old man's acquaintance, I shall be proud to be numbered among your friends."

"So noble and respectable a knight," answered the baron, taking his offered hand, "must ever claim my veneration; and I shall consider myself as improved by his counsels and honoured by his friendship."

The baron then, at the earnest request of his host, took some refreshment, but for the present declined all further stay, as he feared his absence might alarm his guests; and having received the written apology of Villeneuf to Adnee, and a verbal one from him and la Tours to his friends, he took his leave and departed for the castle of Latimer.

He had proceeded scarcely half the way, when he discovered Jaques, Hamet, and Fitz-Hugh, with some few attendants, advancing full speed towards him.—"Well met," cried Fitz-Hugh, "from this hasty return, I trust all is right, for I judge you have followed Villeneuf; though it did not strike me till about an hour and half since, that they might have halted for the night at old la Tours's.—Nor, till I missed you far beyond the usual hour, had I the smallest suspicion you would be so speedy in your resentment."

The baron then informed them of the knight's concession, which they allowed sufficient, and conversing on the subject they reached the castle.

The baron was impatient to present the apology of Villeneuf to Adnee, but restrained by the presence of his friends, he deferred it till after dinner, when leaving them

them he repaired to the apartments of Cicely. The good dame was accompanied by la Roche, who arose on his entrance, saying,—"My Lord, I thank Heaven for your safety, for you have given your friends some alarm. I joy to say, you prove yourself a father as well as master to your vassals, by so nobly espousing their injuries;—but remember, I pray you, that a life of so much import as that of the Baron de Pointz, should not be exposed on light and frivolous grounds."

"I have not exposed it, father," replied he, "but surely if I had found it necessary I should have done well; for in receiving the castle of Latimer did it not become my duty to protect the vassals of that domain? Think you that I would with impunity see a stranger lay waste my lands or destroy my towers?—Surely not, and is it not more incumbent on me to protect the sacred

sacred temple of the immortal soul, the work of the great Creator, "than the stone fabric built by earthly hands?"

"I am answered, my son.—Yet there are some who find cruelty in this kindness; for example, the young maid within hath not ceased to deplore the mischief of which she suspected herself the cause. Conversing with her, and endeavouring to inspire her with fortitude, I have been absent from my duty some hours.—Farewel, my Lord, the Virgin guide you; I will but speak to Jaques, and depart."

"Adieu, good father," answered the baron; and turning to Cicely, he added,—"If your daughter be at leisure, I pray you suffer me to speak a few words to her?"

Cicely immediately retired into an interior apartment, and after a short space of time returned with Adnee, but so changed that the baron started at the alteration; her

her eyes were heavy, her face was pale, and it was evident that she had obeyed his summons with difficulty.

"My dear maid," exclaimed he, thrown off his guard by her appearance, "why this alarming change?—I pray ye tarry not to converse with me, retire to your chamber, and let some advice be called."

"Not so, my gracious Lord," answered Cicely, "she will speedily be better. Considering herself as the cause of involving you in danger, hath alone overcome her."

The pale cheeks of Adnee were in a moment covered with blushes.—"My gentle friend," said the baron, "I bring you a written apology from Villeneuf, who professes himself sorry for the alarm he hath caused you."

As he spoke he presented the writing, which Adnee laid on the table without perusal.

"I

"I would," resumed he, "that you would consider me as a friend, and treat me, as such, with unreserved freedom. As I have the sanction of your respectable mother's presence, will you pardon me if I presume to ask you a few questions, which however, I will premise, are not influenced by curiosity, but a regard for your happiness."

Adnee bowed, and de Pointz continued. "Formed by the partial hand of nature, in her fairest mould, and gifted by a superior understanding, young as you are, I have no doubt that many have sought to gain your affections. Say, my fair friend, is there one happy man to whom you could devote your future life?"

Adnee was too much confused to reply, and the conscious dye of modesty again crimsoned her face and bosom.

"I

"I am answered without words," said de Pointz, in a hurried accent. Then endeavouring to conceal his emotion, he added, "name him, Adnee, and happy may you be; no means on my part shall be wanting to make you so."

Adnee appeared overpowered; she burst into tears, and unable to stand, sunk into a chair.

"Why this confusion, this diffidence? why will you not confide in me? come," said he, with forced cheerfulness, "shall I endeavour to guess this happy man."

"Oh, no, my Lord, for heaven's sake spare me; I am indeed a weak presuming girl, and merit this punishment."

"I think not so; Fitz-Hugh is my true and trusty friend," replied he, with a sigh, "he could not be insensible to thy merit, nor shall thy dower be below his expectations;

tions; in that at least de Pointz is free to testify his affection."

Adnee's countenance bespoke her amazement; she struggled to overcome her confusion, and at length replied, "Abashed as I feel myself, my Lord, I cannot suffer you to remain in error; I respect, I esteem the Knight Fitz-Hugh as your friend, but no more."

"I was then mistaken; some more fortunate man possesses your heart."

"I will never wed; I have no wish but to devote my life to Heaven."

"I entreat, I conjure you," said Cicely, for the first time mingling in the conversation, "to be candid to my generous master,—your feelings overcome you, and grieve all those who love you.—I will retire for a few moments."

As Cicely spoke she left the apartment; Adnee rose to follow her, but the baron catching

catching her robe, said, "Nay, I pray you, obey your mother. Behold me, Adnee, devoted to make you happy;—nay your tears distract me!—I am convinced you love, and it is impossible it should be without return."

Adnee's confusion redoubled, and she turned aside to conceal the emotion that nearly overpowered her. — The baron took her hand, "I see," said he, "that you will not consider me as a friend, and I must in consequence cease to vex you with questions;—yet believe me, there is no one to whom your welfare is dearer. Nay, why do you avert your face? why do you tremble? Am I so fearful, so hateful to you?"

"Hateful!" repeated she, with an emotion which she could not repress, "the Baron de Pointz hateful to me!—the object of my daily thoughts and my nightly prayers,

prayers, — the son of the baroness, honoured next to Heaven!"

Conscious, the instant that she had spoken, that the energy of her feelings had carried her beyond the bounds of maidenly prudence, the blush of ingenuous modesty and candour forsook her cheeks and was replaced by the pale hue of death; a cold dew settled on her polished brow, and she would have sunk senseless to the earth, had not the baron's arms opened to receive her.

Distracted at the sight, he called aloud on Cicely, but she was not within the sound of his voice, and pressing his beauteous burthen to his bosom, he exclaimed, —"Adnee, dearest best beloved of women, shake off this weakness that inspires me with dread, with horror!—Ah, my heart till this moment knew not half its weakness!—Speak, let me hear thy voice,—I cannot bear to see thee thus!"

The

The senses of Adnee suspended, she heard not the words of the baron, and slowly recovering she appeared overwhelmed with confusion to find herself supported by his encircling arms, and hastily withdrawing herself, she endeavoured to leave the apartment.

"Do not quit me thus, dearest maid," said he, "I do not deserve your displeasure. I before said your happiness was truly dear to me, I now add, your honour is equally so.—I confess I could not see your beauty and innocence without feeling their power; but never shall you have to complain, that love made me forget what was due to you."

"I am sensible of your kindness, my Lord;—but am now unable to reply to it."

"I will not longer intrude on you,—I grieve to have vexed you;—my intention was far otherwise, at least at parting give me your hand, in token of friendship."

Adnee

Adnee held out her hand which the baron received with respectful tenderness.—"To be the most humble of the baron's friends," said she, "is one of my most ardent wishes; for when I hear his voice, or he stands before me, methinks the baroness again lives, and my weak heart overflows with gratitude too much for speech."

"Adnee," replied the baron, "I hear thee say with pleasure that I recal my mother to thy memory; for all the world testified her worth, but he who should best have known it."

"My Lord," said she, forgetting her diffidence in the praise of the baroness, "my language would be too poor to speak her worth, and the longest day too short to recapitulate her good deeds; those only who were unacquainted with her virtues could undervalue them.—Would to the Virgin you had seen her, and heard the blessings she

she prayed for on your head.—But pardon me, I give you pain,—yet let one reflection console you, the prayers of inspired souls are registered in Heaven, and will surely be fulfilled."

"Amen! my lovely and pious friend," replied he; "and if the wishes of one so unworthy as myself can find place, may a double portion revert on thyself. I candidly confess, that I believe there is something in the cast of thy person, and in the sound of thy voice, peculiarly adapted to awaken all the tenderness of my nature, for never but once before did I witness such, and then——"

"They perhaps deceived you, my Lord," answered she, with a sigh.

"Too truly guessed; though even yet my heart is wounded by the recollection, for I loved the youth beyond all others, and

and looked forward to a friendship which would be lasting as our lives."

Dame Cicely at that moment entered; the baron pressed the hand of Adnee to his lips, and she immediately left the apartment.

The good dame looked anxiously at both. De Pointz explained her glance to a doubt of his honour; he was, however, mistaken, for no such suspicion crossed her thoughts, for she judged him, as he truly was, too noble minded to wish to gratify his own inclinations by the ruin, or even the humiliation of another.

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XLVI.

ON the following day, the baron finding an opportunity to be alone with Jaques, with some confusion said,—"My good friend, I think that more than once I have honoured myself by calling you father; I wish now to shew that I consider you as such, and to consult you on the most material action of my life.—In short, I love; and must have your opinion of the object of my affection."

The

The baron paused; but as Jaques continued silent, he continued,—"Adnee, the beautiful Adnee, is my choice; a pupil of my mother's, and friend of the Lady Christabelle de Mowbray, are claims that strengthen her power over my heart."

"Have you well considered the difference of your situation?" replied Jaques, "the daughter of an attendant, unallied and unknown. 'Tis merely, my Lord, a passing love; try absence, and you will doubtless forget her."

"I have considered all," answered the baron. "Le Val, her father, is just and honest, and that is true nobility; and for worldly honours, I have a proud heart, and a strong arm, therefore let those who refuse her the right with which I endow her look to it."

"Why do you really then think to wed her?"

"Aye,

"Aye, if I think of her at all.—Do you not judge her deserving?"

"I have not sufficient acquaintance with Cicely's daughter to advise," answered Jaques; "you must take counsel from your own heart, but beware, lest it beguile you."

"You think highly of la Roche, she is evidently his peculiar favourite, which argues that she is pious; her manners are polished, she excels apparently in the accomplishments of her sex, and for beauty and dignity I know not her equal."

"You see with a partial eye, my Lord,—Christabelle de Mowbray was said to be a paragon, and 'tis no wonder her companion should improve by her example."

"Jaques," answered the baron, "Adnee never could be a secondary object. I acknowledge all the merit of Christabelle, and even when I came here, thought I could, though unknown, have wedded her, had

she been living, and would have accepted me;—but then, Jaques, I had not seen Adnee, who now known, is become the object of my warmest affections."

The baron then related to Jaques his suspicions of Fitz-Hugh being attached to Adnee, and the conversation that had passed with her in consequence.

"The knight is lively and susceptible," answered Jaques, "but I think not his partiality lies that way."

The entrance of Hamet and Fitz-Hugh broke on the discourse, which was no more renewed that day; for in the afternoon Sir John la Tours returned the baron's visit, and appeared so well satisfied with his entertainment, and so pleased with his host, that he tarried till the evening was far advanced.

In the mean time Villeneuf, fired with the beauty of Adnee, of whose honour he had

had no doubt, from the general interest she excited among the noble guests at the castle, resolved to bear her away from Fitz-Hugh, whom he was persuaded was his rival; for the active part the baron took in the business, he attributed merely to his friendship to the knight. His rank and fortune far surpassed Fitz-Hugh's, and he had no doubt of supplanting him, if once his designs were known to be honourable; for the baron, however he might have a right to resent any insult given to his vassals, he could not shew any anger against those who made so noble and disinterested an offer, as he concluded his must be judged.

With these thoughts he repaired to the castle of Latimer, attended only by a few vassals. The baron, astonished at his appearance after what had passed, received him with politeness, but without his accustomed warmth; he had no doubt that

Adnee was the attraction which had again made him his guest, but was far from suspecting his present intentions. Requesting to speak with the baron alone, he said,—"I come, my Lord, to expiate fully my former conduct.—I have examined my heart, and find your fair vassal necessary to my happiness, and in consequence am resolved to wed her."

"To wed her!" repeated the baron, with great confusion; but recovering himself, he added, "I am glad you at length do her justice."

"I will thank you," resumed Villeneuf, "to suffer me to specify my will to her. I am pleased to have your sanction, as I feared you might be prejudiced in favour of Fitz-Hugh."

"I am prejudiced in favour of no one," returned the baron; "nor, to my knowledge, has Fitz-Hugh any pretensions to the

the maid, who for me is her own mistress. I will request the presence of dame Cicely, she is the most proper person to refer to."

De Pointz restrained his feelings with difficulty; but resolved to be convinced yet more certainly of the disposition of Adnee, he called for Gregory, and sent him to pray the presence of the dame.—Cicely immediately attended, and appeared overwhelmed with confusion at the offer of Villeneuf. — Her daughter, she replied, was in no haste to wed, and she was convinced it would be unavailing for the Lord Villeneuf to speak to her on the subject; and that they could only remain his debtors for the proposal.

De Pointz was astonished at the dame so peremptorily refusing an offer which appeared so advantageous, while Villeneuf could scarcely believe the evidence of his senses; for he had entertained no doubt

but that Adnee and her parents would have accepted his proposal with transport. — With some warmth he requested to be suffered to see the maid, and at least receive the denial from her own lips.

"I will most faithfully deliver your words to her, my Lord," answered Cicely, "and truly bring back her answer; or, as I trust entirely to her in what so nearly concerns her peace, she may herself deliver it."

De Pointz would have withdrawn, but Cicely entreating his presence, and Villeneuf obliged by politeness to join in the request, he remained. Cicely then retired, and after a quarter of an hour's absence, returned, accompanied by Adnee, who appeared covered with confusion, and unable to speak; till Villeneuf approaching her, and repeating his offer, she seemed at once to overcome her fears, and fixing her eyes upon him, with modest dignity she replied,

replied,—"My Lord, I can but return you thanks for the offer you have on second thoughts condescended to make me, but must beg to decline it."

"Decline it!" exclaimed Villeneuf, "impossible!—This refusal, fair Adnee, arises from pique, at my having before offended you."

"You mistake, my Lord; and as I would have this meeting final, that hereafter no confusion may ensue, I have, however unwillingly, yielded to give my answer personally. Had you never insulted me, it would have been the same; though undoubtedly that circumstance did not raise you in my estimation."

"I will erase the remembrance by every means in my power," interrupted he.

"It is impossible; but were it not so, I have no heart to bestow on the Lord Villeneuf."

"Your affections are then engaged?" said he.

A smile of contempt sat on the dimpled cheek of Adnee.—"Does that follow," said she, "because you, my Lord, are not the man of my choice?—I pray you think no more of this business, light and sudden love is soon forgotten; consider what has past as a dream. Hereafter I trust you will meet with one more sensible of the distinction you pay her."

So saying, with a courtesy, evidently more directed to the baron than Villeneuf, she left the apartment with the dame.

Neither the baron nor Villeneuf broke silence for some minutes; at length the latter starting up, said,—"Now who the plague would have believed this?—In faith, had the whole conclave sworn it, I should have thought it false. I own her handsome as an angel, but as proud as Lucifer.

In

In faith, were King John himself to offer her his hand, she would think she did him a favour to accept it."

"And from what I can judge, she would confer one," replied de Pointz; "for what higher obligation can a man receive, than the affection of a young, beautiful, and accomplished woman?—Or what greater compliment can she pay him, than by entrusting her future happiness to his care?"

"True, my Lord; but a man who marries without wealth or birth on the part of his bride, has surely a right to expect some concessions, which he must not expect———"

"From one whom he took by weight," interrupted the baron, laughing. "Thy ideas and mine on marriage will never agree; I will never wed for wealth, and the wife of my choice, in accepting my hand, I shall regard as at once legally entitled to

all the advantages I possess, whether in honours, wealth, or birth.—And by my soul, I should be so jealous of her privileges, had she been before marriage my inferior in rank, that I would not overlook the smallest particle of respect that was denied her."

"I will away!" said Villeneuf. "I can scarcely yet think I am awake,—a man of my rank and fortune to be refused by such a girl, a———"

"Pupil of my mother's," interrupted the baron, to prevent Villeneuf saying what he might find it proper to resent. "'Tis indeed provoking, but heed it not; thou art naturally loving, and this fit will wear off as well as those which have preceded it."

"By Heaven, I never was in love before!—I own I admire women, but not as you do, for I will neither make angels or goddesses of them."

"Thou

"Thou art wise," replied the baron, "and will therefore be the more readily satisfied, for women are sufficiently plenty."

Villeneuf was vexed from his disappointment, and not pleased with the baron; yet he did not choose to quarrel with him, and calling for his horses he soon after departed.

As de Pointz in the afternoon sat with his friends, he related the errand of Villeneuf, and the refusal of Adnee. Jaques declared that her conduct heightened her in his estimation, as did also Hamet; while Fitz-Hugh, starting up, with an oath declared, that to him it would have been excellent sport if Adnee had accepted the offer.

"Why so," said the baron, "what could it be to thee?—I confess I should have been severely

severely grieved, for I am convinced he is not worthy of her."

"And pray who is?" returned Fitz-Hugh, impatiently, "no man that I know, except myself; and was I not in love, I would shew you the difference.—Confound me, if I had been the Baron de Pointz, if any man should have made love to her, in my house, unless he had first carved his passage through my heart."

"Ridiculous," said Jaques, "sure it would not be just to bias her judgment; the baron acts as a man of honour to leave her choice free."

"Many a man has frittered away his own happiness with brain maggots.—He thinks I do not know it, but he loves her himself;—and is he not his own master?—Surely that is sufficient."

"Not quite," said Jaques, "as there is such a disproportion in circumstances, 'tis necessary

necessary he should be assured no interested motives prevail."

"Thou art wonderfully discerning in this affair," replied the baron to Fitz-Hugh, "art thou sure that love doth not render thee so clear sighted?—I confess, however, that thou art right,—and feel, that in acknowledging an affection for Adnee, I do myself honour.—Yet I think it more than probable she may refuse me."

"It merits at least a trial," said Fitz-Hugh. "It is plain she is not mercenary, by her rejection of Villeneuf;—and I have no doubt, that where she gives her hand she will give her heart."

More discourse passed, and as they separated for the night, Fitz-Hugh said,—"Let me bear your good wishes with me, for to-morrow, at early dawn, I shall leave you for a day or two."

"Leave

"Leave us," replied the baron, "what meanest thou?—Stranger as thou art in England, whither art thou going?"

"That you shall know hereafter.—I have seen a little estate that pleases me well, and mean to bid for the purchase; if I succeed, you shall see my bargain."

"Well, Heaven speed you," said Jaques, "'tis doubtless no weighty business that you treat it so lightly."

"That is as it may turn out," replied he, "tis a pretty piece of English earth, and I am resolved not to dally while some other richer or wiser fellow may snap it up.—But enough on the subject—a good repose to all."

CHAPTER

CHAPTER XLVII.

THE baron, accustomed to Fitz-Hugh's jests, merely thought his absence one of his usual whims, and that he would at least return to dinner the ensuing day; he was however deceived, for the evening arrived without his appearance.

Resolved to declare his passion for Adnee, he had repaired alone, in the morning, to Cicely's apartments, and requested to speak with her daughter in her presence.—The dame

dame entreated him to excuse her, saying, she believed that the offer of Villeneuf had too much hurried her spirits, for she had passed a bad night, and was confined to her chamber. The baron expressed the utmost alarm, which he truly felt; he requested that no care might be wanting to restore her,—and when he retired, restless and uneasy, could not refrain from enquiring hourly after her health.

Jaques and Hamet, in the evening, had withdrawn to the chapel of the convent, while the baron, wishing to commune without interruption with his own heart, walked from the castle towards the open road.—As he proceeded, at a distance he saw a man riding on an ass, and who, as he drew near, he recognized for Jonas, the pilgrim.—

"What dost thou on my domain?" said the baron, as he reached him, "I thought I had forbidden thee to appear before me."

"True,

"True, my gracious master," answered he, leaping from his beast and throwing himself on his knees, "but, good my Lord, I have no friend under the canopy of Heaven except yourself, and can I then be blamed for seeking you out?—If you help me not, I must perish.—For the sake of the blessed manuscript, which I found in Palestine, take pity on me, make me the meanest of your vassals, and I shall be content."

"Where hast thou been since we parted at Penzance?" demanded the baron, "hast thou no friends nor home?"

"Alas! no, my Lord.—Like Satan, I have been wandering about the earth, until at length I resolved once more to throw myself on your mercy."

"And thou shouldst meet it," answered de Pointz, "but that thou art such an errant prying, curious, gossiping knave, that I cannot venture to have the least trust in thee."

"By

"By my life, my gracious Lord, you are mistaken, I am neither curious nor prying; and as for gossiping, I am as silent as the grave."

"I wish I may find thee so.—Away, hie thee, varlet, to the castle of Latimer, and tell them, in my name, to give thee food and a new garment, for thou art as ragged as a colt."

"Heaven bless you, my Lord!—I will thankfully obey, and gratefully, to the hour of my death, remember the wedding-day of the Knight Fitz-Hugh."

So saying, lowly bowing, he was on the point of remounting his beast, when the baron, his attention attracted by the last words, replied,—"Do so, though I know not, whenever he weds, what it will be to thee."

"True, my noble master, but I shall have reason to bless and remember it, for it

it will mark the day when you took pity on me."

Fitz-Hugh's mysterious absence at once struck on the baron, yet convinced that by some means the prying disposition of Jonas had led him into error, he said,—"I see thou canst not forget thy evil propensities, but beware how thou offendest me again; and for the Knight Fitz-Hugh, if he catches thee watching his ways, I dare vouch he will not forget to pay thee with a good drubbing."

"Heaven forefend I should be guilty of such deeds, my Lord; I am in this case as innocent of curiosity as the saint before whose altar I knelt.—Surely 'tis no sin for a man to go to chapel, and I could not but see the gallant knight and his beautiful bride ——"

"His bride!" interrupted the baron, his astonishment vanquishing his disgust of encouraging

encouraging Jonas's talking propensity;—"What bride?—when didst thou see him?"

"Pardon me, my Lord, and shield me, if it be wrong, from blame.—I saw the knight wedded, in the chapel of the Benedictines, at Auckland, this blessed morning."

"Wedded!" exclaimed the baron, "thou must lie, and look to it.—How camest thou there?—Relate what thou knowest, but with strict truth, or I forsake thee for ever."

"My Lord, I have wandered since that unfortunate day you discarded me, until at length I resolved once more to try your noble nature ——"

"Pish!" interrupted the baron, "I want not thy history.—How camest thou at Auckland?"

"Simply then, my Lord, I had reached it, after a weary journey, in my way hither. My poor beast, which I purchased with part of

of the last gold you gave me, could, yesternight proceed no farther, from weariness."

The baron stamped with impatience.

"Good my Lord, pardon me, I love not to be loquacious, but in this case I cannot help it.—A merciful man hath mercy on his beast ——"

"I will have none on such an ass as thee," interrupted the baron, "again I say, how camest thou in the Benedictine chapel?"

"Gracious master, to say my prayers, and to crave some assistance of the holy fathers, which might help me forward to Latimer.—I suffered my beast to feed, and then tied him to a tree under which I slept till late, for I was sorely tired."

"So am I, haste thee to the conclusion."

"Well, my Lord, I arose and went to chapel, and heard prayers and a solemn mass; when thinking all concluded, I with humility approached one of the fathers, with my

my request of some succour. The father answered kindly, that my prayer should be granted after mid-day; but for the present he could not quit the chapel, for that a young and noble knight was before noon to be wedded, which ceremony concluded, he would attend to me. In the mean time he conducted me to a private chapel on one side the great building, and where he commanded me to prostrate myself before the altar it contained till he returned, as he left me, closing the door after him, which was of an open grating of brass.—Indeed, my Lord, I am not curious, but I could not but wish just to see the bride and noble bridegroom; so, gently rising, I had peeped but a short time through the lattice of the door, when, preceded by two priests, who should pass but the knight, Fitz-Hugh; who, though the main chapel be dark, from the pillars and painted windows,

I saw plainly. — He led a lady, who I thought looked beautiful, but I saw her not so plain as I did the knight, for her face was averted towards a man who walked on the further side, but whose person I could not discern, though I then judged it might be your Lordship. The chapel where I was, is at the extremity of the building, therefore as they proceeded they were in a moment lost to my view, but I indistinctly heard the ceremony, and the hymn that follows the nuptial benediction; when fearful of the priest coming hastily upon me, I resumed my place before the saint, and saw no more. The father speedily joined me; and giving me the means to procure food, he bid me adieu. As I left the chapel I saw some few persons standing, whom I judged had been attracted by the marriage; and wishing to learn whom the noble

noble knight had wedded, I asked if they knew the name of the bride."

"Aye, her name!" exclaimed the baron, with eager impatience.

"An old man said, she was called Adnee le Val; and that she was reckoned one of the fairest maids in the country, and an only child, or I misunderstood him, to one of the most honoured vassals on your Lordship's domain."

For a few moments de Pointz was unable to reply; his head sunk on his bosom, and his heart swelled to almost suffocation. "Get thee gone," at length cried he, "as I before commanded, to Latimer, but come not in my sight, for thou art hateful to me; I would that thou hadst been in purgatory, before I had ever seen thee."

Fearful of a harsher order Jonas hastened away, internally accusing the baron of caprice and injustice; as he could by no means

means attain the height of confidence he wished.

For some time de Pointz appeared rooted to the spot,—

"Hateful accursed deceitful world," at length exclaimed he.—"Fool that I am, the sport of every traitor!—Bertram,—Fitz-Hugh, two whom I, idiot like, considered as friends, as brothers, to deceive me thus!—And thou, hypocritical designing prevaricating Adnee, what motive could influence thy deceit?—Though my heart bled to make the offer, I had resolved to yield thee to Fitz-Hugh, if thy happiness required that sacrifice!"

Reflecting on the subject, he turned towards the castle.—"Fitz-Hugh's anger at Villeneuf's offer to Adnee is then explained, as is her refusal," thought he; "yet what could influence him to persuade me to declare a passion for her, except to triumph

over my weakness?—Revenge is yet in my reach, and no earthly power shall divert me from it!—I will not, in my anger, forget the former services of le Val and his wife, but I will not keep such serpents under my roof.—Yet perhaps the man knew it not.—At all events they shall no longer render Latimer hateful to me.—There was once a woman, whose virtues my memory loved to dwell upon, and whom I ungratefully almost forgot in contemplating Adnee.—Christabelle de Mowbray, thou art revenged!—thou hast happily escaped from a bad world;—would to Heaven I were with thee, or thou hadst lived to give life some dearer claim than it now possesses in my heart!"

END OF VOL. III.

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